



LETTERS  
OF  
*JAMES BOSWELL*

COLLECTED AND EDITED

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*'Put my letters in a book, neatly'*

BOSWELL TO TEMPLE

*IN TWO VOLUMES: VOLUME II*

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## VOLUME II

1778-1795

|  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| 179. To Samuel Johnson, 8 January 1778 . . .                 | 271  |
| 180. To the same, 26 February 1778 . . .                     | 271  |
| 181. To the same, 28 February 1778 . . .                     | 273  |
| 182. To Edmund Burke, 8 March 1778 . . .                     | 274  |
| 183. To Samuel Johnson, 12 March 1778 . . .                  | 275  |
| 184. To Sir Alexander Dick, Baronet, 30 April 1778 . . .     | 276  |
| 185. To Samuel Johnson, [April 1778] . . .                   | 277  |
| 186. To the Reverend Dr. Thomas Percy, 25 April [1778] . . . | 278  |
| 187. To Samuel Johnson, 18 June 1778 . . .                   | 278  |
| 188. To Sir Alexander Dick, Baronet, July 1778 . . .         | 279  |
| 189. To the same, [October 1778] . . .                       | 280  |
| 190. To the Reverend Dr. Thomas Percy, [? 1778] . . .        | 281  |
| 191. To Samuel Johnson, 2 February 1779 . . .                | 281  |
| 192. To the same, 26 April [1779] . . .                      | 283  |
| 193. To the Reverend William Temple, 3 May 1779 . . .        | 283  |
| 194. To Sir Alexander Dick, Baronet, 28 June [1779] . . .    | 288  |
| 195. To the same, [1779] . . .                               | 289  |
| 196. To Samuel Johnson, 17 July 1779 . . .                   | 290  |
| 197. To Sir Alexander Dick, Baronet, 15 October 1779 . . .   | 290  |
| 198. To Samuel Johnson, 22 October 1779 . . .                | 291  |
| 199. To the same, 7 November 1779 . . .                      | 294  |
| 199a. To the same, 22 November 1779 . . .                    | 296  |
| 200. To the Bishop of Derry, 15 December 1779 . . .          | 298  |
| 201. To the Reverend William Temple, 4 January 1780 . . .    | 299  |
| 202. To Samuel Johnson, 29 April 1780 . . .                  | 302  |
| 203. To the same, 24 August [1780] . . .                     | 302  |
| 204. To the Reverend William Temple, 3 September 1780 . . .  | 303  |
| 205. To Samuel Johnson, 6 September [1780] . . .             | 310  |
| 206. To the same, 1 October [1780] . . .                     | 310  |

|  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| 207. To Mrs. David Garrick, 16 April 1781 . . .                        | 311  |
| 208. To Mrs Thrale, 25 May 1782 . . .                                  | 311  |
| 209. To the same, 9 July 1782 . . .                                    | 312  |
| 210. To the same, 20 December 1782 . . .                               | 314  |
| 211. To John Wilkes, 14 February 1783. . .                             | 314  |
| 212. To the same, 26 March 1783 . . .                                  | 315  |
| 213. To the same, 12 May [1783] . . .                                  | 316  |
| 214. To the same, 21 [May 1783] . . .                                  | 316  |
| 215. To the same, 25 May 1783 . . .                                    | 317  |
| 216. To —, 26 May 1783 . . .   | 317  |
| 217. To Sir Alexander Dick, Baronet, [17 or 18 December<br>1783] . . . | 317  |
| 218. To the same, 7 January 1784. . .                                  | 318  |
| 219. To Samuel Johnson, 8 January 1784 . . .                           | 318  |
| 220. To Sir Joshua Reynolds, 6 February 1784 . . .                     | 319  |
| 221. To William Pitt, [? February 1784]. . .                           | 320  |
| 222. To Doctors Cullen, Hope, and Monro, 7 March 1784. . .             | 320  |
| 223. To the Right Reverend Thomas Percy, 8 March 1784 . . .            | 321  |
| 224. To Lord Thurlow, 24 June 1784 . . .                               | 323  |
| 225. To the Right Reverend Thomas Percy, 8 July 1784 . . .             | 324  |
| 226. To [George-Monck] Berkeley, [? 1785] . . .                        | 324  |
| 227. To the Reverend Dr William Adams, 21 January 1785 . . .           | 325  |
| 228. To the Right Reverend Thomas Percy, 20 March 1785 . . .           | 325  |
| 229. To John Pinkerton, 23 May [1785]. . .                             | 327  |
| 230. To Sir Joshua Reynolds, 7 June 1785 . . .                         | 327  |
| 231. To Joseph Cooper Walker, 1 July 1785 . . .                        | 328  |
| 232. To Sir John Dick, Baronet, 2 September 1785 . . .                 | 329  |
| 233. To Joseph Cooper Walker, 20 December 1785 . . .                   | 330  |
| 234. To the Reverend Dr. William Adams, 22 December 1785 . . .         | 331  |
| 235. To —, [January 1786] . . .  | 331  |
| 236. To Euphemia Boswell, 4 March 1786 . . .                           | 332  |
| 237. To John Wilkes, 9 March [1786] . . .                              | 332  |
| 238. To John Spottiswoode, 16 March 1786 . . .                         | 333  |
| 239. To the same, 25 March 1786 . . .                                  | 334  |
| 240. To —, 10 May 1786 . . .   | 335  |
| 241. To the Right Reverend Thomas Percy, 12 July 1786 . . .            | 335  |
| 242. To the Reverend William Temple, 5 January 1787 . . .              | 336  |
| 243. To the Reverend Mr. Astle, 14 February 1787 . . .                 | 337  |

# Table of Contents

vii

|   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| 244 To Francis Barber, 29 June 1787 . . . . .   | 338  |
| 245. [To the Reverend James Beattie, October 1787] . . . . .                                      | 339  |
| 246 To the Reverend John Hussey, 15 October 1787 . . . . .  | 339  |
| 247. To the Right Reverend Thomas Percy, 9 February 1788 . . . . .                                | 340  |
| 248. To the Reverend William Temple, 24 February 1788 . . . . .                                   | 342  |
| 249 To Francis Barber, 3 March 1788 . . . . .   | 345  |
| 250. To the same, 20 March 1788 . . . . .   | 346  |
| 251. To the same, 11 April 1788 . . . . .   | 347  |
| 252. To Anna Seward, 11 April 1788 . . . . .  | 348  |
| 253. To the Reverend James Beattie, 1788 . . . . .  | 349  |
| 254. To Edmond Malone, 12 July 1788 . . . . .   | 349  |
| 255. To the same, 7 October 1788 . . . . .  | 352  |
| 256 To the Reverend William Temple, 10 January 1789. . . . .                                      | 352  |
| 257. To the same, 16 February 1789 . . . . .  | 356  |
| 258. To the same, 5 March 1789 . . . . .  | 358  |
| 259. To the same, 10 March 1789 . . . . .   | 362  |
| 260. To the same, 16 March 1789 . . . . .   | 363  |
| 261. To the same, 31 March 1789 . . . . .   | 364  |
| 262. To George Henry Hutton, 2 April 1789 . . . . .   | 367  |
| 263. To the Reverend William Temple, 22 May 1789 . . . . .  | 368  |
| 264. To Lord Lonsdale, [? May 1789] . . . . .   | 372  |
| 265. To the Reverend William Temple, 3 July 1789 . . . . .  | 373  |
| 266. To the same, 2 August 1789 . . . . .   | 375  |
| 267. To the same, 23 August 1789. . . . .   | 376  |
| 268. To the same, 13 October 1789 . . . . .   | 379  |
| 269. To the same, 28 November 1789 . . . . .  | 381  |
| 270. To the same, 8 February 1790 . . . . .   | 387  |
| 271. To the same, 13 February 1790 . . . . .  | 389  |
| 272. To the Right Reverend Thomas Percy, 12 March 1790 . . . . .                                  | 391  |
| 273. To Bennet Langton, 9 April 1790 . . . . .  | 392  |
| 274. To the Right Reverend Thomas Percy, 9 April 1790 . . . . .                                   | 393  |
| 275. To Isaac Reed, 12 April [1790] . . . . .   | 395  |
| 276. To the same, [1790] . . . . .  | 396  |
| 277. To the Reverend William Temple, 21 June 1790 . . . . .                                       | 396  |
| 278. To the Mayor, Aldermen, Bailiffs, and Capital Citizens<br>of Carlisle, 28 June 1790. . . . . | 398  |
| 279. To the Reverend William Temple, 21 July 1790 . . . . .                                       | 399  |
| 280. To the same, 15 September 1790 . . . . .   | 401  |

|  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| 281. To Dr. [James] Lind, 29 October 1790 . . .          | 402  |
| 282. To George Steevens, 30 October [1790] . . .         | 402  |
| 283. To Lord Hawkesbury, 1 November 1790 . . .           | 403  |
| 284. To John Wilkes, 18 November [1790] . . .            | 404  |
| 285. To the Reverend William Temple, 24 November 1790 .  | 405  |
| 286. To Edmond Malone, 4 December 1790 . . .             | 405  |
| 287. To the same, 7 December 1790 . . .                  | 407  |
| 288. To the same, 16 December 1790 . . .                 | 409  |
| 289. To Dr. John Coakley Lettsom, 25 December 1790 .     | 411  |
| 290. To the Reverend Dr. Samuel Parr, 10 January 1791 .  | 411  |
| 291. To Edmond Malone, 18 January 1791 . . .             | 412  |
| 292. To the same, 29 January 1791 . . .                  | 415  |
| 293. To the Reverend William Temple, 7 February 1791 .   | 419  |
| 294. To Edmond Malone, 10 February 1791 . . .            | 420  |
| 295. To the same, 25 February 1791 . . .                 | 423  |
| 296. To the same, 8 March [1791] . . .                   | 426  |
| 297. To the same, 12 March 1791 . . .                    | 428  |
| 298. [To Lord Hawkesbury], 23 March 1791 . . .           | 430  |
| 299. To the Reverend William Temple, 2 April 1791 .      | 430  |
| 300. To George Dempster, 19 April 1791 . . .             | 434  |
| 301. To [Frances] Abington, 15 June 1791 . . .           | 436  |
| 302. To the Right Reverend Dr John Douglas, 17 June 1791 | 436  |
| 303. To John Wilkes, 25 June [1791] . . .                | 437  |
| 304. To Sir William Scott, 9 August 1791 . . .           | 437  |
| 305. To the Reverend William Temple, 22 August 1791 .    | 438  |
| 306. To the same, 22 November 1791 . . .                 | 440  |
| 307. To the Reverend Charles Burney, 2 January 1792 .    | 441  |
| 308. To Dr. John Coakley Lettsom, 27 January 1792 .      | 442  |
| 309. To the Reverend William Temple, 29 March 1792 .     | 442  |
| 310. To James Abercrombie, 11 June 1792 . . .            | 442  |
| 311. To Lord Lisburne, 21 September 1792 . . .           | 444  |
| 312. To John Wilkes, 24 December 1792 . . .              | 445  |
| 313. To the Reverend William Temple, 26 February 1793    | 445  |
| 314. To the same, 21 June 1793 . . .                     | 446  |
| 314a. To Bennet Langton, 15 July 1793 . . .              | 448  |
| 315. To the same, 24 July 1793 . . .                     | 449  |
| 316. To the Reverend John Campbell, 26 July 1793 .       | 449  |
| 317. To James Abercrombie, 28 July 1793 . . .            | 452  |

|  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| 318. To Sir Michael Le Fleming, Baronet, 31 July 1793 . . . . .                    | 455  |
| 319. To Evan Nepean, 13 September 1793 . . . . .                                   | 456  |
| 320. To the Reverend William Temple, 14 October 1793 . . . . .                     | 457  |
| 321. To the Reverend Mr. Jones, 10 February 1794. . . . .                          | 458  |
| 322. To Henry Dundas, 17 March 1794 . . . . .                                      | 459  |
| 323. To the Reverend William Temple, 31 May 1794 . . . . .                         | 460  |
| 324. To Thomas David Boswell, 13 October 1794 . . . . .                            | 461  |
| 325. To Lady Orkney, 22 March 1795 . . . . .                                       | 463  |
| 326. To the Reverend William Temple, [April 1795] . . . . .                        | 464  |
| 327. To Edmond Malone, 13 April 1795 . . . . .                                     | 465  |
| 328. To the Reverend William Temple, 17 April 1795 . . . . .                       | 466  |
| 329. To Warren Hastings, 24 April 1795 . . . . .                                   | 466  |
| 330. James Boswell, jr., to the Reverend William Temple,<br>16 May 1795 . . . . .  | 467  |
| 331. James Boswell, jr., to the Reverend William Temple,<br>18 May 1795 . . . . .  | 467  |
| 332. Thomas David Boswell to the Reverend William<br>Temple, 19 May 1795 . . . . . | 468  |

(See p. xi for Supplementary Letters.)

## APPENDIX I

### Letters of Boswell relating to the Estate at Auchinleck

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| 1. To an Agent, 1 March 1786 . . . . .      | 469 |
| 2. To an Agent, 12 November 1788 . . . . .  | 470 |
| 3. To Andrew Gibb, 5 January 1790 . . . . . | 472 |
| 4. To the same, [6] November 1790 . . . . . | 473 |
| 5. To the same, 11 November 1790 . . . . .  | 475 |
| 6. To the same, 30 November 1790 . . . . .  | 476 |
| 7. To the same, 16 December 1790 . . . . .  | 477 |
| 8. To the same, 20 December 1790 . . . . .  | 478 |
| 9. To the same, 30 December 1790 . . . . .  | 478 |
| 10. To the same, 4 January 1791 . . . . .   | 479 |
| 11. To the same, 11 January 1791. . . . .   | 480 |

|  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| 12. To the same, 24 February 1791 . . . . .                | 480  |
| 13. To the same, 30 April 1791 . . . . .                   | 481  |
| 14. To the same, 4 June 1791 . . . . .                     | 482  |
| 15. To the same, 1 August 1791 . . . . .                   | 483  |
| 16. To the same, 28 November 1791 . . . . .                | 483  |
| 17. To the same, 24 February 1792 . . . . .                | 484  |
| 18. To the same, 14 March 1792 . . . . .                   | 486  |
| 19. To Mr. Alexander of Ballochmyle, 9 June 1792 . . . . . | 487  |
| 20. To Andrew Gibb, 6 August 1792 . . . . .                | 488  |
| 21. To the same, 2 October 1792 . . . . .                  | 488  |
| 22. To the same, 12 October 1792 . . . . .                 | 489  |
| 23. To the same, 22 October 1792 . . . . .                 | 490  |
| 24. To the same, 13 November 1792 . . . . .                | 491  |
| 25. To the same, 5 December 1792 . . . . .                 | 493  |
| 26. To the same, 18 December 1792 . . . . .                | 493  |
| 27. To the same, 24 January 1793 . . . . .                 | 494  |
| 28. To the same, 23 March 1793 . . . . .                   | 496  |
| 29. To the same, 31 May 1793 . . . . .                     | 496  |
| 30. To the same, 20 June 1793 . . . . .                    | 498  |
| 31. To the same, 3 July 1793 . . . . .                     | 498  |
| 32. To the same, 14 August 1793 . . . . .                  | 498  |
| 33. To the same, 9 September 1793 . . . . .                | 499  |
| 34. To the same, 25 September 1793 . . . . .               | 500  |
| 35. To the same, 12 December 1793 . . . . .                | 501  |
| 36. To the same, 13 December 1793 . . . . .                | 502  |
| 37. To the same, 10 January 1794 . . . . .                 | 504  |
| 38. To James Morton, 4 February 1794 . . . . .             | 506  |
| 39. To Andrew Gibb, 26 February 1794 . . . . .             | 506  |
| 40. To the same, 7 March 1794 . . . . .                    | 509  |
| 41. To the same, 27 March 1794 . . . . .                   | 510  |
| 42. To the same, 12 April 1794 . . . . .                   | 511  |
| 43. To the same, 9 May 1794 . . . . .                      | 513  |
| 44. To the same, 2 February 1795 . . . . .                 | 514  |
| 45. To the same, 23 February 1795 . . . . .                | 515  |
| 46. To the same, 2 March 1795 . . . . .                    | 515  |
| 47. To the same, 19 March 1795 . . . . .                   | 516  |
| 48. To the same, 27 March 1795 . . . . .                   | 517  |

APPENDIX II

|  |      |
|--|------|
| Boswell's Poem to John Wilkes            | PAGE |
| Specimen of 'Parliament, a Poem' . . . . | 519  |

APPENDIX III

SUPPLEMENTARY LETTERS

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| 106a To Lord Loudoun, 18 April [1771] . . .          | 520 |
| [148a. To Sir Joshua Reynolds], 12 August 1775 . . . | 520 |
| 177a. To Lord Loudoun, 30 October 1777 . . .         | 521 |
| 179a. To the same, 19 January 1778 . . .             | 522 |
| 191a. To the same, 8 February 1779 . . .             | 523 |
| 207a. To [Henry Dundas], 20 April 1782 . . .         | 523 |
| 283a. To the same, 16 November 1790 . . .            | 524 |
| 283b. To the same, [November 1790] . . .             | 525 |
| 323a. To the same, 14 June 1794 . . .                | 527 |
| LIST OF RECIPIENTS OF BOSWELL'S LETTERS .            | 528 |
| INDEX . . . . .                                      | 530 |





# LETTERS OF JAMES BOSWELL

## 179. To Samuel Johnson<sup>1</sup>

Dear Sir,

Edinburgh, 8 January 1778.

Your congratulations upon a new year are mixed with complaint: mine must be so too. My wife has for some time been very ill, having been confined to the house these three months by a severe cold, attended with alarming symptoms<sup>2</sup>

Did you ever look at a book written by Wilson, a Scotchman, under the Latin name of *Volusenus*, according to the custom of literary men at a certain period? It is entitled *De Animi Tranquillitate*. I earnestly desire tranquillity. *Bona res quies*: but I fear I shall never attain it: for, when unoccupied, I grow gloomy, and occupation agitates me to feverishness. . . . I am, dear Sir,

Your most affectionate humble servant,

James Boswell.

## 180. To Samuel Johnson<sup>3</sup>

My dear Sir,

Edinburgh, 26 February 1778.

Why I have delayed, for near a month, to thank you for your last affectionate letter, I cannot say; for my mind has been in better health these three weeks than for some years past. I believe I have evaded till I could send you a copy of Lord Hailes's opinion on the negro's cause, which he wishes you to read, and correct any errors that there may be in the language; for, says he, 'we live in a critical, though not a learned age;

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iii 215.

<sup>2</sup> 'Here I gave a particular account of the distress which the person upon every account most dear to me suffered; and of the dismal state of

apprehension in which I now was, adding that I never stood more in need of his consoling philosophy.' *Boswell*.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, iii. 219

and I seek to screen myself under the shield of Ajax. I communicated to him your apology for keeping the sheets of his *Annals* so long. He says, 'I am sorry to see that Dr Johnson is in a state of languor. Why should a sober Christian, neither an enthusiast nor a fanatick, be very merry or very sad?' I envy his Lordship's comfortable constitution: but well do I know that languor and dejection will afflict the best, however excellent their principles. I am in possession of Lord Hailes's opinion in his own hand-writing, and have had it for some time. My excuse then for procrastination must be, that I wanted to have it copied; and I have now put that off so long, that it will be better to bring it with me than send it, as I shall probably get you to look at it sooner, when I solicit you in person.

My wife, who is, I thank God, a good deal better, is much obliged to you for your very polite and courteous offer of your apartment: but, if she goes to London, it will be best for her to have lodgings in the more airy vicinity of Hyde-Park. I, however, doubt much if I shall be able to prevail with her to accompany me to the metropolis; for she is so different from you and me, that she dislikes travelling; and she is so anxious about her children, that she thinks she should be unhappy if at a distance from them. She therefore wishes rather to go to some country place in Scotland, where she can have them with her.

I purpose being in London about the 20th of next month, as I think it creditable to appear in the House of Lords as one of Douglas's Counsel, in the great and last competition between Duke Hamilton and him.<sup>1</sup> . . .

I am sorry poor Mrs. Williams is so ill: though her temper is unpleasant, she has always been polite and obliging to me. I wish many happy years to good Mr. Levett, who I suppose holds his usual place at your breakfast table.<sup>2</sup> I ever am, my dear Sir,

Your affectionate humble servant,  
James Boswell.

<sup>1</sup> Boswell, not one of the regular advocates in this famous case, had volunteered his services in behalf of Archibald Douglas.

<sup>2</sup> 'Dr Percy, the Bishop of Dro-

more, humorously observed that Levett used to breakfast on the crust of a roll, which Johnson, after tearing out the crumb for himself, threw to his humble friend,' Boswell.



through that dense and troubled body, a modern British Parliament. But, enough of this subject; for your angry voice at Ashbourne<sup>1</sup> upon it, still sounds awful 'in my mind's ears.' I ever am, my dear Sir,

Your most affectionate humble servant,

James Boswell.

## 182. To Edmund Burke<sup>2</sup>

Dear Sir,

Edinburgh, 8 March 1778.

Upon my honour I began a letter to you some time ago, and did not finish it, because I imagined you were then near your *apotheosis*—as poor Goldsmith said upon a former occasion, when he thought your party was coming into administration; and being one of your old barons of Scotland, my pride could not brook the appearance of paying my court to a minister, amongst the crowd of interested expectants, on his accession. At present, I take it for granted that I need be under no such apprehension; and, therefore, I resume the indulgence of my inclination.

This may be, perhaps, a singular method of beginning a correspondence; and, in one sense, may not be very complimentary. But I can sincerely assure you, dear Sir, that I feel and mean a genuine compliment to Mr. Burke himself. It is generally thought no meanness to solicit the notice and favour of a man in power; and surely it is much less a meanness to endeavour by honest means to have the honour and pleasure of being on an agreeable footing with a man of superior knowledge, abilities, and genius.

I have to thank you for the obligations which you have already conferred upon me by the welcome which I have, upon repeated occasions, experienced under your roof. When I was last in London, you gave me a general invitation, which I value more than a treasury warrant:—an invitation to the 'feast of reason'; and what I like still more, 'the flow of soul', which you dispense with liberal and elegant abundance, is in my estimation a privilege of enjoying certain felicity; and we

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iii. 205.

<sup>2</sup> From the *Correspondence of Edmund Burke*, ii. 207.

know that riches and honour are desirable only as a means of felicity, and that they often fail of the end.

Most heartily do I rejoice that our present ministers have at last yielded to conciliation.<sup>1</sup> For amidst all the sanguinary zeal of my countrymen I have professed myself a friend to our fellow-subjects in America, so far as they claim an exemption from being taxed by the representatives of the King's British subjects. I do not perfectly agree with you; for I deny the declaratory act; and I am a warm Tory, in its true constitutional sense. I wish I were a commissioner, or one of the secretaries of the commission, for the grand treaty. I am to be in London this spring, and if his majesty should ask me what I would choose, my answer will be, to assist at the compact between Britain and America.

May I beg to hear from you, and, in the meantime, to have my compliments made acceptable to Mrs Burke?

I am, dear Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

James Boswell.

### 183. To Samuel Johnson<sup>2</sup>

My dear Sir,

Edinburgh, 12 March 1778.

The alarm of your late illness distressed me but a few hours; for on the evening of the day that it reached me, I found it contradicted in *The London Chronicle*, which I could depend upon as authentick concerning you, Mr. Strahan being the printer of it. I did not see the paper in which 'the approaching extinction of a bright luminary' was announced. Sir William Forbes told me of it; and he says, he saw me so uneasy, that he did not give me the report in such strong terms as he had<sup>3</sup> read it.

<sup>1</sup> Parliament had recently authorized the appointment of a commission to negotiate peace with the Americans. An act 'for removing all doubts and apprehensions concerning taxation by the Parliament of Great Britain in any of the colonies' was passed 2 March 1778. *Annual*

*Register* for 1778, chap. 7.

In Boswell's expressed desire to sit on this commission we find the *raison d'être* of this letter.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, III 221.

<sup>3</sup> *had* is omitted in the second and third editions.

He afterwards sent me a letter from Mr Langton to him, which relieved me much. I am, however, not quite easy, as I have not heard from you; and now I shall not have that comfort before I see you, for I set out for London to-morrow before the post comes in. I hope to be with you on Wednesday morning; and I ever am, with the highest veneration, my dear Sir,

Your much obliged, faithful, and affectionate,  
humble servant,  
James Boswell.

#### 184. To Sir Alexander Dick, Baronet<sup>1</sup>

My dear Sir Alexander, London, 30 April 1778.

With most unexpected pleasure was I favoured when your kind and pleasant letter arrived, I owed you many thanks, and you confer more benefits. Your friend, the Bishop of Oxford,<sup>2</sup> received me very courteously. Mrs. Strange is well, and rattles away with as much vivacity as ever. I have only met Dr. Armstrong in the street; but I intend to call on him very soon. He was happy to hear of you *en passant*. I am much entertained with your rural triumph over *us men of London*. I know not but to the pure natural mind the pleasures and beauties of the country are superior to those of a city. But I have habits far different from those of pure nature. Besides, may it not be maintained that a mind in the state that mine is, is more civilised?

A thousand thanks to you and Lady Dick and Miss Dick for your care of my valuable spouse. She writes me a full account of your goodness to her. Pray do not let her go from you. I am quite happy to think she is at Prestonfield.

It is somewhat uncertain how soon I may be home. My wife will explain to you how. But to own the truth to you, my dear Sir, I am really unhappy in being separated from my *Minerva* as you used to say.

You will excuse the shortness of my epistle. It shall be amply made up to you by a recital, when we meet.

<sup>1</sup> From Lady Forbes, *Cumosiities of a Scots Charta Chest*, p. 262.

<sup>2</sup> John Butler (1717-1802).

My kindest compliments to all at Prestonfield. I wish to find my wife there; but I fancy she will be gone to town, and we shall come out together to *rusticate*, soon after my arrival.

I am ever

Your much obliged and affectionate friend,

James Boswell.

185. To Samuel Johnson<sup>1</sup>

My dear Sir,

⟨April 1778⟩.

I beg leave to address you in behalf of our friend Dr. Percy, who was much hurt by what you said to him that day we dined at his house; when, in the course of the dispute as to Pennant's merit as a traveller, you told Percy that 'he had the resentment of a narrow mind against Pennant, because he did not find every thing in Northumberland'. Percy is sensible that you did not mean to injure him; but he is vexed to think that your behaviour to him upon that occasion may be interpreted as a proof that he is despised by you, which I know is not the case. I have told him, that the charge of being narrow-minded was only as to the particular point in question; and that he had the merit of being a martyr to his noble family.

Earl Percy is to dine with General Paoli next Friday; and I should be sincerely glad to have it in my power to satisfy his Lordship how well you think of Dr. Percy, who, I find, apprehends that your good opinion of him may be of very essential consequence; and who assures me, that he has the highest respect and the warmest affection for you.

I have only to add that my suggesting this occasion for the exercise of your candour and generosity, is altogether unknown to Dr. Percy, and proceeds from my good-will towards him, and my persuasion that you will be happy to do him an essential kindness. I am, more and more, my dear Sir,

Your most faithful

and affectionate humble servant,

James Boswell.

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iii. 277; cf. p. 271 for the incidents which gave rise to this correspondence.

Dear



186. To the Reverend Thomas Percy<sup>1</sup>

Dear Sir,

South Audley Street, 25 April (1778).

I wrote to Dr Johnson on the subject of the *Pennantian* controversy, and have received from him an answer which will delight you. I read it yesterday to Dr. Robertson, at the Exhibition; and at dinner to Lord Percy, General Oglethorpe, &c. who dined with us at General Paoli's; who was also a witness to the high *testimony* to your honour.

General Paoli desires the favour of your company next Tuesday to dinner to meet Dr. Johnson. If I can, I will call on you to-day. I am, with sincere regard,

Your most obedient humble servant,

James Boswell.<sup>2</sup>187. To Samuel Johnson<sup>3</sup>

My dear Sir,

Edinburgh, 18 June 1778.

. . . Since my return to Scotland, I have been again at Lanark, and have had more conversation with Thomson's sister. It is strange that Murdoch, who was his intimate friend, should have mistaken his mother's maiden name, which he says was Hume, whereas Hume was the name of his grandmother by the mother's side. His mother's name was Beatrix Trotter<sup>4</sup>, a daughter of Mr. Trotter, of Fogo, a small proprietor of land. Thomson had one brother, whom he had with him in England as his amanuensis; but he was seized with a consumption, and having returned to Scotland, to try what his native air would do for him, died young. He had three sisters, one married to

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iii. 278.

<sup>2</sup> 'Though the Bishop of Dromore kindly answered the letters which I wrote to him, relative to Dr Johnson's early history, yet, in justice to him, I think it proper to add, that the account of the foregoing conversation and the subsequent transaction, as well as some other conversations in which he is mentioned, has been given to the publick without previous

communication with his Lordship.'  
*Boswell*.<sup>3</sup> *Life*, iii. 359.

<sup>4</sup> 'Dr. Johnson was by no means attentive to minute accuracy in his *Lives of the Poets*; for notwithstanding my having detected this mistake, he has continued it.' *Boswell*. The information which Boswell sent was derived from original sources which Johnson had no other means of tapping

Mr.

Mr. Bell, minister of the parish of Strathaven; one to Mr. Craig, father of the ingenious architect, who gave the plan of the New Town of Edinburgh; and one to Mr. Thomson, master of the grammar-school at Lanark. He was of a humane and benevolent disposition; not only sent valuable presents to his sisters, but a yearly allowance in money, and was always wishing to have it in his power to do them more good. Lord Lyttelton's observation, that 'he loathed much to write', was very true. His letters to his sister, Mrs. Thomson, were not frequent, and in one of them he says, 'All my friends who know me, know how backward I am to write letters; and never impute the negligence of my hand to the coldness of my heart' I send you a copy of the last letter which she had from him; she never heard that he had any intention of going into holy orders. From this late interview with his sister, I think much more favourably of him, as I hope you will. I am eager to see more of your Prefaces to the Poets; I solace myself with the few proof-sheets which I have.

I send another parcel of Lord Hailes's *Annals*,<sup>1</sup> which you will please to return to me as soon as you conveniently can. He says, 'he wishes you would cut a little deeper;' but he may be proud that there is so little occasion to use the critical knife. I ever am, my dear Sir,

Your faithful and affectionate, humble servant,

James Boswell.

## 188. To Sir Alexander Dick, Baronet<sup>2</sup>

My dear Sir,

July 1778.

I send you for your amusement four *Rampagers*<sup>3</sup> which you will please return and tell me how you like them; as also *The Hypochondriack*, No. IX,<sup>4</sup> which you may keep.

<sup>1</sup> See letter of 12 May 1774, p. 202.

<sup>2</sup> From the facsimile in Lady Forbes's *Curiosities of a Scots Chateau*, p. 257.

<sup>3</sup> So far as I know, Boswell uses this name nowhere else. It was probably some playful term which he

and Sir Alexander used for certain jottings of Boswell's.

<sup>4</sup> *The Hypochondriack*, no. 9 (July 1778) is on the subject of Youth and Age. The essay had been begun on the Continent years before.

Heaven grant you a full recovery, and if you will allow your friends to use Horace's votive verse,

*Serus in coelum* <sup>1</sup>

I am ever most affectionately yours,

James Boswell.

Pray continue the notes of biography.<sup>2</sup>

### 189. To Sir Alexander Dick, Baronet<sup>3</sup>

My dear Sir,

<October 1778.><sup>4</sup>

You certainly have some part of the *biography*.<sup>5</sup> If you have not, I must have locked it by so closely that I cannot find it at once. Pray let me know. I think I returned you a parcel of it of your own MS.

You have very well and fully noted both the entail business, and that of the turnpike roads, which are the great public exertions of your life; as also the critical point of the Great Canal in which you was so spirited.

I wish you would now note something of the Royal College<sup>6</sup>—And go on with the *biography*, mentioning your second marriage and its happy consequences. Also mark your agreeable friends with whom you have corresponded, and refer to the treasure of letters which I hope to assist in arranging.

I could wish too that you would mark your *studies*, and as far as you please your *opinions* in religion and politics. I value very highly the confidence you put in me; and I ever am most affectionately yours,

James Boswell.

Your *opinions*, I suppose, you will mark with your own

<sup>1</sup> Horace, *Odes*, i. 2. 45.

<sup>2</sup> On 12 January 1777, Sir Alexander wrote in his diary, 'Last week Mr. James Boswell, my friend, expressed a desire to make a Biographical account of my life to my 74th year . . . I looked over many jottings . . . of past times and we had some droll interviews, and it becomes, he says, very interesting' Lady Forbes, *op. cit.*, p. 257.

<sup>3</sup> From the original in the Public Library of New York City.

<sup>4</sup> The letter is endorsed, in another hand, 'Oct. 5th, 1778'.

<sup>5</sup> See the preceding letter. The notes written the year before had evidently been mislaid.

<sup>6</sup> Sir Alexander had formerly been President of the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh.

hand. For though I beleive them to be truly pious, yet there may be a *liberality* in them which may be misunderstood by your secretary.<sup>1</sup> You are an *elder*; and, I trust, a brother Christian.

### 190. To the Reverend Dr. Thomas Percy<sup>2</sup>

Dear Sir,

<? 1778.>

I return you the list of Mr. Johnson's writings with many thanks. I must tell you, however, that he allowed Levet to dictate to you several errours, as for instance the *Conquest of Goree*, and the preface to Sully. He corrected these errours *himself* to me. Mr. Garrick is very desirous to have a copy of the list; but I must ask your permission before I give it; or I would rather wish you should give it yourself. If you do not forbid me, I will give it.

I hope to hear from you at Edinburgh and am, dear Sir,

Your obliged humble servant,

James Boswell.

### 191. To Samuel Johnson<sup>3</sup>

My dear Sir,

Edinburgh, 2 February 1779.

Garrick's death is a striking event; not that we should be surprised with the death of any man, who has lived sixty-two years; but because there was a *vivacity* in our late celebrated friend, which drove away the thoughts of *death* from any association with *him*. I am sure you will be tenderly affected with his departure; and I would wish to hear from you upon the subject. I was obliged to him in my days of effervescence in London, when poor Derrick was my governour;<sup>4</sup> and since that time I

<sup>1</sup> Miss Dick

<sup>2</sup> From the original in the Adam Collection. The letter must have been written before the death of Garrick (1779). It is completely explained by *Life*, iii. 321.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, iii. 371. Garrick died 20 January.

<sup>4</sup> '<He> was my first tutor in the

ways of London, and shewed me the town in all its variety of departments, both literary and sportive' (*Life*, i. 456). The reference is to Boswell's first visit to London. In Samuel Derrick's *Letters* (Dublin, 1767), No XIV is addressed 'To James Boswell, Esq; of Authenleck <*sic*> North-Britain.' The letter, which is

received

received many civilities from him. Do you remember how pleasing it was, when I received a letter<sup>1</sup> from him at Inverary, upon our first return to civilized living after our Hebridean journey? I shall always remember him with affection as well as admiration.

On Saturday last, being the 30th of January,<sup>2</sup> I drank coffee and old port, and had solemn conversation with the Reverend Mr. Falconer, a nonjuring bishop, a very learned and worthy man. He gave two toasts, which you will believe I drank with cordiality, Dr. Samuel Johnson, and Flora Macdonald. I sat about four hours with him, and it was really as if I had been living in the last century. The Episcopal Church of Scotland, though faithful to the royal house of Stuart, has never accepted of any *congé d'élire*, since the Revolution; it is the only true Episcopal Church in Scotland, as it has its own succession of bishops. For as to the episcopal clergy who take the oaths to the present government, they indeed follow the rites of the Church of England, but, as Bishop Falconer observed, 'they are not *Episcopals*; for they are under no bishop, as a bishop cannot have authority beyond his diocese.' This venerable gentleman did me the honour to dine with me yesterday, and he laid his hands upon the heads of my little ones. We had a good deal of curious literary conversation, particularly about Mr. Thomas Ruddiman,<sup>3</sup> with whom he lived in great friendship.

Any fresh instance of the uncertainty of life makes one embrace more closely a valuable friend. My dear and much respected Sir, may God preserve you long in this world while I am in it. I am ever,

Your much obliged,

and affectionate humble servant,

James Boswell.

quite impersonal, is dated Killarney, 5 October 1760. It is certainly not a genuine letter to Boswell; doubtless his name was connected with it by his own request. It remains a significant example of Boswell's intimacy with the Master of Ceremonies at Bath.

<sup>1</sup> *Tour to the Hebrides*, p. 349.

<sup>2</sup> Feast of Charles, King and Martyr.

<sup>3</sup> For Ruddiman see *Life*, I. 211. 'His zeal for the Royal House of Stuart did not render him less estimable in Dr. Johnson's eye.' Boswell. Boswell thought of writing the life of Ruddiman.

192. To Samuel Johnson<sup>1</sup>

My dear Sir, South Audley Street, Monday, 26 April <1779>.

I am in great pain with an inflamed foot, and obliged to keep my bed, so am prevented from having the pleasure to dine at Mr. Ramsay's<sup>2</sup> to-day, which is very hard; and my spirits are sadly sunk. Will you be so friendly as to come and sit an hour with me in the evening. I am ever

Your most faithful,

And affectionate humble servant,

James Boswell.

## 193. To the Reverend William Temple

My dear Temple,

London, 3 May 1779.

Had you been in London a week ago, you would have seen your friend sadly changed for a little. So trifling a matter as letting the nails of my great toes grow into the flesh, particularly in one foot, produced so much pain and inflammation and lameness and apprehension that I was confined to bed, and my spirits sank to dreary dejection. However, this gave me leisure to finish completely the reading of your book.<sup>3</sup> I am now much better, but still unable to walk. And having received a very wise letter from my dear, sensible, valuable wife, that although my father is in no immediate danger, his indisposition is such that I ought to be with him, I have resolved to set out tomorrow, being the very first day, after completing another term at the Temple. I am sitting comfortably at Mr. Dilly's. The three letters which I have had the pleasure to receive from you during my present visit to London are lying before me. I have marked the *heads* (as you advise) upon a slip of paper;

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iii. 391. Boswell adds, 'He came to me in the evening, and brought Sir Joshua Reynolds. I need scarcely say that their conversation, while they sate by my bedside, was the most pleasing opiate to pain that could have been administered.'

<sup>2</sup> Allan Ramsay, the portrait-painter. For dinners at his house, see *Life*, iii, *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> *Moral and Historical Memoirs*. London: Printed for Edward and Charles Dilly in the Poultry, 1779, pp. viii + 424.

and, I trust, shall omit no article or particular to which you wish me to attend

It gives me much satisfaction to understand that your *circumstances* (as the phrase is) are so good: £6,000 fund and only £1,200 debt. So you have £4,800 clear; *i.e.*, at 5 *per cent.*, £240 a year, which *with your* living makes better than £500 a year. Living in Cornwall you may certainly save handsomely every year, so as to increase your fortune. But do not delay turning your land into money as soon as you can. You must not on any account *waver* as to your northern jaunt. For it would be sad indeed if I were disappointed of meeting you this year, after so long a separation. You and I and worthy Johnston will walk in the King's Park, and have all the good ideas we have ever possessed agreeably revived. Is it not curious that at times we are in so happy a frame that not the least trace of former misery or vexation is left upon the mind? But is not the contrary too experienced? Gracious Author of our being! do thou bring us at length to steady felicity! What a strange complicated scene is this life. It always strikes me that we cannot seriously, closely, and clearly examine almost any part of it. We are at pains to bring up children, just to give them an opportunity of struggling through cares and fatigues. But let us hope for gleams of joy here, and a blaze hereafter.

Let us not dispute any more about political notions. It is now night. Dr. Johnson has dined, drunk tea, and supt with only Mr. Charles Dilly and me<sup>1</sup>; and I am *confirmed* in my Toryism. What is more, I am happy in my good old principles, could but that sad *necessary shock*, the *Revolution*, be forgotten.

I know not if Lord Hailes's second volume be yet ordered for you. I shall deliver your book to him; and see to your getting his. Mr. Burke told me he had not received your book, yet it was certainly delivered to his old housekeeper. He asked me if it had merit. I said it had learning and elegance of expression, and a great deal about Liberty, which he would like, but I did not like. He said he would read it, which is a compliment he does not often pay to a book. I have therefore ordered another

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iii. 392.

copy\* to be sent to him with a card from me, to remind him. It is an erroneous report that he wrote the *European Settlements*:<sup>1</sup> he told me he did not, a freind of his did, and he revised 1<t>.

4 May 1779, Southhill, Bedfordshire.

I began this letter at *the literary head quarters* in the Poultry. I am now at Southhill, to which place Mr. Charles Dilly has accompanied me. It is the house of Squire John Dilly, his elder brother (the family of Dilly have been land proprietors in this county for two hundred years; but have lately exchanged their ancient inheritance lying in the midst of Lord Torrington's estate, for another estate belonging to his Lordship)

I am quite the *great man* here, and am to go forward on the north road tomorrow morning. Poor Mr. Edward Dilly<sup>2</sup> is fast adying. He cried with affection at seeing me here. He is in as agreeable a frame as any Christian can be. Repeats the 2d paragraph of Dr Young's second *Night*, 'Why start at death?',<sup>3</sup> &c. and another passage, 'Death a subterraneous road to bliss', or some such words. I am edified here.

Newcastle upon Tyne, 8 May 1779.

I got into the fly at Buckden, and had a very good journey. An agreeable young widow nursed me and supported my lame foot on her knee. Am I not fortunate in having something about me that interests most people at first sight in my favour? I am to rest here till Monday when I hope to get *home* to my wife and children. I never wished so warmly to see them again as I do at present. What a pleasing attraction after quitting London!

You ask me about Lowth's *Isaiah*<sup>4</sup>; I never once heard it mentioned, till I asked Dr. Johnson about it, who said he could give no opinion about it himself, as he had not read it. But he was told it was a great work for those that love that kind of learning. The second edition is not in octavo. So you had

\* See p 387.

<sup>2</sup> Edward Dilly died on 11 May.

<sup>3</sup> The passage is in Night IV (line 6), not Night II

<sup>4</sup> Robert Lowth (1710-87), Bishop

of London. His annotated translation of the Book of Isaiah had appeared in the previous year; it was reprinted twice in 1779.



better wait I do not think Lowth an engaging man; I sat a good while with him this last spring. He said Dr. Johnson had *great genius*. I give you this as a specimen of his talk, which seemed to me to be neither discriminating, pointed, nor animated. Yet he certainly has much curious learning and a good deal of critical sagacity. I put into his hands, at Sir Alexander Dick's desire, the first book of a *British Georgick*, which the worthy amiable Knight has been for some time past (after 73) amusing himself in composing. It is blank verse precepts [I am now writing, or rather going to write, at Newcastle, Sunday, 9 May] in agriculture and gardening, interspersed with political reflections and complimentary characters. You cannot imagine how fond he is of this *work*. There are in it very good things; and sometimes tolerable lines. But he really is not a poet. He said for some time that he intended it only for his son and a few friends. But I have perceived the wish of publication gradually springing from the root, which has, I take it, been all along in his mind. He even desired I would shew it to Strahan; which was a strong indication of what he flattered himself would be *encouraged* by his friends. I evaded his inclination, laying hold of what he declared as to his intending his *Georgick* only for his son and his descendants, and telling him that to shew it to Strahan who, as poor Garrick said, was an *obtuse man*, would be like shewing family furniture to an auctioneer, and that the critical remarks of Lowth would be quite sufficient. Lady Dick was very uneasy lest he should publish it. Last year I left a part of it with Dr. Armstrong. I was curious to see how he would bring himself off with Sir Alexander, in giving his opinion of what his friend exhibited to him as poetry, but which *he* knew not to come under that species of composition. He did very well. He wrote.—It has the best part of poetry, 'good sense, without which all poetry is little better than nonsense. But I wish you would give us something *de temperamentis*; for which you must have made collections'. Here he made a fine transition to Sir Alexander's skill in physick, not acknowledging, however, in his friend what he states in his poem on health, 'One power of physick, melody, and song'. -

The

The Bishop of London is in a scrape. I doubt if he will *se turer d'affaire* as cleverly as Armstrong did.<sup>1</sup>

I laugh to think how your unshaken Cato  
Will stand aghast while *unexpected* prosing  
Pours in upon him.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Johnson had not heard of Pearce's Sermons,<sup>3</sup> which I wondered at, considering that he wrote all the life published by the Chaplain Derby, except what his Lordship wrote himself. I dare say you may buy any performance by Pearce without any recommendation; and be pretty sure of being pleased. I have not looked at Gibbon's defence;<sup>4</sup> and I hear nothing of the publication of his second volume. He is an ugly, affected, disgusting fellow<sup>5</sup> and poisons our literary club to me. I did not know Monboddo's new book, *The Metaphysics of the Ancients*, had

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Lowth wrote to Sir Alexander, 19 May 1779, 'I had the honour of seeing Mr. Boswell who put into my hands your papers. I told Mr. Boswell that I had at that time very little leisure to look into them, but I understood he would make a considerable stay in town. Mr. Boswell did me the honour lately to call upon me again. I soon after endeavoured to wait upon him with your papers in my hand, but he was gone out of town. . . . I have read with much pleasure your *Georgic*; in which there is good matter and much agreeable description and digression. I consider it as what you designed it for, a Domestic Poem; in which your Muse chuses to appear, as she may properly do, in *dishabille*.' Lady Forbes, *op. cit.*, p. 272. It is clear that Boswell did not estimate highly enough a bishop's ability *se turer d'affaire*.

<sup>2</sup> From the last speech in Act II of Addison's *Cato*. The words 'unexpected prosing' are of course Boswell's own.

<sup>3</sup> No collection of sermons by Zachary Pearce (1690-1774), successively Bishop of Bangor and Rochester, ever appeared; but single sermons were published at intervals between 1723 and 1760. The dedication to Pearce's posthumous *Commentary on the Four Evangelists* was written by Johnson.

<sup>4</sup> The Bishop had left some account of his life and character, written by himself. To this Johnson made some valuable additions, and also furnished to the editor, the Reverend Mr. Derby, a Dedication' (*Life*, III. 112-13).

<sup>5</sup> The second volume of the *Decline and Fall* did not appear till 1781; meanwhile Gibbon had published (1779) his *Vindication of Some Passages in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Chapters of the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, written in reply to various attacks.

<sup>6</sup> 'I well knew his vandy, even about his ridiculous face and person, but thought he had too much sense to avow it so palpably' Walpole, *Letters*, II. 376.

been advertised<sup>1</sup> I expect it will be found to be a very wonderful performance. I think I gathered from a conversation with him, that he beleives the *metempsychosis* 'Voltaire! Rousseau! immortal names!' I don't hear of new editions of them.

Your gentle reproof for not answering your letters exactly I felt to be very just. I think Dr Johnson never *answered* but three of my letters, though I have had numerous *returns* from him. Have I not *now* answered all yours to which I was indebted?

As to your book now that I have read it over, I must candidly tell you that I think you should not puzzle yourself with political speculations more than I do. Neither of us is fit for that sort of mental labour. Mind your health, your temper, your fortune, your wife and children, and, above all, your duties as a clergyman. But *publick matters* will be better conducted or at least as well as *we* can suggest. Your letters to me and your cursory remarks on authours in the green book are, in my opinion, so much better than the college-like sentences your book contains, that I have a fresh proof how very few even of those who have good parts are fit for the study, far less the practice, of government. You are an agreeable companion in a post chaise; but by no means fit to be a driver. We should cultivate the excellent principle of *submission for the Lord's sake*. When<sup>2</sup> . . .

#### 194. To Sir Alexander Dick, Baronet<sup>3</sup>

My dear Sir,

Monday, 28 June (1779).

This morning I opened my box from London which arrived on Saturday evening; and I found in it a copy of our excellent freind Sir John Pringle's<sup>4</sup> last discourse before the Royal Society, which I send to you. I thank you for *Gillicranky*.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Antient Metaphysics or the Science of Universals*, six volumes, Edinburgh, 1779-99.

<sup>2</sup> The rest of the manuscript has been torn away.

<sup>3</sup> From the original in the Public Library of New York City. The letter is endorsed in another hand, 'J. Boswell, 1779.'

<sup>4</sup> Sir John Pringle, Baronet (1707-82), who had been a witness of Boswell's baptism. Boswell implored Johnson to avoid three topics when conversing with Lord Auchinleck, 'Whiggism, Presbyterianism—and Sir John Pringle'. *Tour to the Hebrides*, p. 376.

<sup>5</sup> Various songs inspired by the Dundee

Dundee was before this not *ignotus* like those *fortes ante Agamemnona*<sup>1</sup> But he was wrong. I am obliged to you for your hints as to my *Hypochondriack*. I wish you had given me more. If to-morrow is a good day I may perhaps have the pleasure of taking a part of your family dinner, and shewing you a fine letter from Temple—quite a homily, in which he is charmed with your writing a *Georgick*.<sup>2</sup> By the by, you must not stop short—but pursue your plan *tibi et amicis*. My sore toe plagues me yet. I am ever

Most affectionately  
and gratefully yours,  
James Boswell.

### 195. To Sir Alexander Dick, Baronet<sup>3</sup>

My dear Sir,

<Edinburgh, 1779>.

I most sincerely wish you joy of the happy concurrence of circumstances in favour of William.<sup>4</sup> The Duke of Gloucester,<sup>4</sup> to whom Sir John Dick presented me, is, I really think, a man above common, and I hope William shall have the praise *principibus placuisse viris*.<sup>5</sup> I was very sorry that indisposition kept me from you last Saturday. I make your *Archy* an Atlas; for I make him carry you out *Arthur's Seat*,<sup>6</sup> which you kindly lent me. Your alteration of *Gillicranky*<sup>7</sup> is good, and shall be marked.

Ever yours,

J. B.

battle of Kilhecrankie (1689) were sung during the eighteenth century, but the reference here is probably to an original poem of Sir Alexander's

<sup>1</sup> Horace, *Odes*, iv 9. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Alexander wrote in his diary, 6 December 1780: 'My first book British Georgic was finished. Gave J. Boswell the last few lines on the plantations at Auchenleck, and some rhymes dedicated to himself, with which he was much pleased.' Lady Forbes, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

<sup>3</sup> From the original in the possession of Sir W. S. Dick-Cunyngham, Baronet. Below the address, in

Boswell's hand, 'With Arthur's Seat and a Newspaper'. Endorsed in another hand, 'Fr. Boswell, 1779'.

<sup>4</sup> Probably a reference to the purchase of a commission in the Guards for William Dick, and to the patronage of the Duke of Gloucester, who was brother of King George III. Boswell makes no other reference to having been presented to the Duke.

<sup>5</sup> Horace, *Epistles*, i. 17. 35.

<sup>6</sup> One of Sir Alexander's poems in manuscript.

<sup>7</sup> Sir Alexander had sent to Boswell an improved text of the poem.

196. To Samuel Johnson<sup>1</sup>

My dear Sir,

Edinburgh, 17 July 1779.

What may be justly denominated a supine indolence of mind has been my state of existence since I last returned to Scotland. In a livelier state I had often suffered severely from long intervals of silence on your part; and I had even been chid by you for expressing my uneasiness. I was willing to take advantage of my insensibility, and while I could bear the experiment, to try whether your affection for me would, after an unusual silence on my part, make you write first. This afternoon I have had very high satisfaction by receiving your kind letter of inquiry, for which I most gratefully thank you. I am doubtful if it was right to make the experiment; though I have gained by it. I was beginning to grow tender, and to upbraid myself, especially after having dreamt two nights ago that I was with you. I and my wife, and my four children, are all well. I would not delay one post to answer your letter; but as it is late, I have not time to do more. You shall soon hear from me, upon many and various particulars; and I shall never again put you to any test. I ever<sup>2</sup> am, with veneration, my dear Sir,

Your much obliged,

and faithful humble servant,

James Boswell.

197. To Sir Alexander Dick, Baronet<sup>3</sup>

My dear and excellent Freind,

London, 15 October 1779.

I have had an admirable jaunt. But such is the hurry in which this great metropolis unavoidably engages me, that I really cannot write to you as I could wish. As I am soon to be home again, you shall have an inundation of entertainment when I have the happiness to meet you at Prestonfield. But in the mean time I cannot but indulge the pleasure of telling you with great truth that I am exceedingly pleased with my young

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, iii. 395.<sup>2</sup> *ever* is omitted in the second and third editions.<sup>3</sup> From the original in the possession of Sir W. S. Dick-Cunyngham, Baronet.

friend

friend William.<sup>1</sup> The very morning after my arrival I surprised him with a visit; and I have seen him a great deal. He has been so good as to accompany me in my long morning walks more than once. I have presented him to General Paoli, Lord Mountstuart, and Dr Johnson. Yesterday he dined at the General's in company with Dr. Johnson.<sup>2</sup> He looks vastly well in his regimentals, and seems to have such a prudent rational way of thinking, that I trust he will not be corrupted in this town of temptations. I have not failed from time to time to throw into his mind some good counsels; and I rejoice to observe that he has an affectionate regard for me. Adieu, my dear Sir, till we meet. Pray give my best compliments to Lady Dick and all your amiable young family. I ever am

Most cordially yours,

James Boswell.

### 198. To Samuel Johnson<sup>3</sup>

My dear Sir,

Chester, 22 October 1779.

It was not till one o'clock on Monday morning, that Colonel Stuart and I left London; for we chose to bid a cordial adieu to Lord Mountstuart, who was to set out on that day on his embassy to Turin. We drove on excellently, and reached Lichfield in good time enough that night. The Colonel had heard so preferable a character of the George, that he would not put up at the Three Crowns, so that I did not see our host Wilkins.<sup>4</sup> We found at the George as good accommodation as we could wish to have, and I fully enjoyed the comfortable thought that *I was in Lichfield again*. Next morning it rained very hard, and as I had much to do in a little time, I ordered a post-chaise, and between eight and nine sallied forth to make

<sup>1</sup> 'Ensign Dick, 1st Batt. Foot Guards.' *Lady Forbes*. He was under seventeen years of age at this time.

<sup>2</sup> Of this dinner Boswell, strangely enough, preserved no other record.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, iii. 411

<sup>4</sup> In March 1776, Boswell and

Johnson had put up at the Three Crowns, 'not one of the great inns, but a good old-fashioned one, which was kept by Mr. Wilkins, and was the very next house to that in which Johnson was born and brought up'. *Life*, ii. 461.

a round of visits. I first went to Mr. Green,<sup>1</sup> hoping to have had him to accompany me to all my other friends, but he was engaged to attend the Bishop of Sodor and Man, who was then lying at Lichfield very ill of the gout. Having taken a hasty glance at the additions to Green's museum, from which it was not easy to break away, I next went to the Friery,<sup>2</sup> where I at first occasioned some tumult in the ladies, who were not prepared to receive *company* so early but my *name*, which has by wonderful felicity come to be so<sup>3</sup> closely associated with yours, soon made all easy, and Mrs. Cobb and Miss Adye re-assumed their seats at the breakfast table, which they had quitted with some precipitation. They received me with the kindness of an old acquaintance; and after we had joined in a cordial chorus to *your* praise, Mrs. Cobb gave *me* the high satisfaction of hearing that you said, 'Boswell is a man who I believe never left a house without leaving a wish for his return.' And she afterwards added, that she bid you tell me, that if ever I came to Lichfield, she hoped I would take a bed at the Friery. From thence I drove to Peter Garrick's, where I also found a very flattering welcome. He appeared to me to enjoy his usual chearfulness; and he very kindly asked me to come when I could, and pass a week with him. From Mr. Garrick's, I went to the palace to wait on Mr. Seward.<sup>4</sup> I was first entertained by his lady and daughter, he himself being in bed with a cold, according to his valetudinary custom. But he desired to see me; and I found him drest in his black gown, with a white flannel night-gown above it; so that he looked like a Dominican friar. He was good-humoured and polite; and under his roof too my reception was very pleasing. I then proceeded to Stow-hill, and first paid

<sup>1</sup> For Richard Green, the antiquary, see *Life*, II. 465.

<sup>2</sup> During their visit to Lichfield in 1776, Boswell and Johnson had 'breakfasted with Mrs. Cobb, a widow lady, who lived in an agreeable sequestered place close by the town, called the Friary, it having been formerly a religious house. She and her niece, Miss Adey, were great

admirers of Dr. Johnson; and he behaved to them with a kindness and easy pleasantry.' *Life*, II. 466.

<sup>3</sup> so omitted in second and third edition.

<sup>4</sup> The Reverend Thomas Seward, Canon Residentiary of Lichfield, who lived in the Bishop's palace. Canon Seward was the father of Anna Seward, the Swan.

my respects to Mrs. Gastrell,<sup>1</sup> whose conversation I was not willing to quit. But my sand-glass was now beginning to run low, as I could not trespass too long on the Colonel's kindness, who obligingly waited for me, so I hastened to Mrs. Aston's, whom I found much better than I feared I should; and there I met a brother-in-law of these ladies, who talked much of you, and very well too, as it appeared to me. It then only remained to visit Mrs. Lucy Porter, which I did, I really believe, with sincere satisfaction on both sides. I am sure I was glad to see her again; and, as I take her to be very honest, I trust she was glad to see me again; for she expressed herself so, that I could not doubt of her being in earnest. What a great key-stone of kindness, my dear Sir, were you that morning! for we were all held together by our common attachment to you. I cannot say that I ever passed two hours with more self-complacency than I did those two at Lichfield. Let me not entertain any suspicion that this is idle vanity. Will not you confirm me in my persuasion, that he who finds himself so regarded has just reason to be happy?

We got to Chester about midnight on Tuesday; and here again I am in a state of much enjoyment. Colonel Stuart and his officers treat me with all the civility I could wish; and I play my part admirably. *Lætus aliis, sapiens sibi*, the classical sentence which you, I imagine, invented the other day, is exemplified in my present existence. The Bishop,<sup>2</sup> to whom I had the honour to be known several years ago, shews me much attention; and I am edified by his conversation. I must not omit to tell you, that his Lordship admires, very highly, your *Prefaces to the Poets*. I am daily obtaining an extension of agreeable acquaintance, so that I am kept in animated variety; and the study of the place itself, by the assistance of books, and of the Bishop, is sufficient occupation. Chester pleases my fancy more than any town I ever saw. But I will not enter upon it at all in this letter.

<sup>1</sup> 'Mrs. Aston . . . and her sister, Mrs. Gastrell, a widow lady, had each a house and garden, and pleasure-ground, prettily situated upon Stow-

hill, a gentle eminence adjoining to Lichfield.' *Life*, ii. 470.

<sup>2</sup> Beilby Porteus.



How long I shall stay here I cannot yet say. I told a 'very pleasing young lady,'<sup>1</sup> niece to one of the Prebendaries, at whose house I saw her, 'I have come to Chester, Madam, I cannot tell how; and far less can I tell how I am to get away from it.' Do not think me too juvenile. I beg it of you, my dear Sir, to favour me with a letter while I am here, and add to the happiness of a happy friend, who is ever, with affectionate veneration,

Most sincerely yours,

James Boswell.

If you do not write directly, so as to catch me here, I shall be disappointed. Two lines from you will keep my lamp burning bright.

### 199. To Samuel Johnson<sup>2</sup>

My dear Sir,

Carlisle, 7 November 1779.

That I should importune you to write to me at Chester, is not wonderful, when you consider what an avidity I have for delight; and that the *amor* of pleasure, like the *amor nummi*, increases in proportion with the quantity which we possess of it. Your letter, so full of polite kindness and masterly counsel, came like a large treasure upon me, while already glittering with riches. I was quite enchanted at Chester, so that I could with difficulty quit it. But the enchantment was the reverse of that of Circé; for so far was there from being any thing sensual in it, that I was *all mind*. I do not mean all reason only; for my fancy was kept finely in play. And why not?—If you please I will send you a copy, or an abridgement of my Chester journal, which is truly a log-book of felicity.

The Bishop treated me with a kindness which was very flattering. I told him, that you regretted you had seen so little of Chester.<sup>3</sup> His Lordship bade me tell you, that he should be glad to shew you more of it. I am proud to find the friendship with which you honour me is known in so many places.

I arrived here late last night. Our friend the Dean<sup>4</sup> has

<sup>1</sup> 'Miss Letitia Barnston' Boswell. Wales on July 26, 1774.' Hill.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, iii. 415.

<sup>4</sup> Percy.

<sup>3</sup> 'He had seen it on his tour in

been gone from hence some months ; but I am told at my inn, that he is very *populous* (popular). However, I found Mr. Law, the Archdeacon, son to the Bishop, and with him I have breakfasted and dined very agreeably. I got acquainted with him at the assizes here, about a year and a half ago ; he is a man of great variety of knowledge, uncommon genius, and I believe, sincere religion. I received the holy sacrament in the Cathedral in the morning, this being the first Sunday in the month ; and was at prayers there in the evening. It is divinely cheering to me to think that there is a cathedral so near Auchinleck ; and I now leave Old England in such a state of mind as I am thankful to God for granting me.

The *black dog* that worries me at home I cannot but dread ; yet as I have been for some time past in a military train, I trust I shall *repulse* him. To hear from you will animate me like the sound of a trumpet, I therefore hope, that soon after my return to the northern field, I shall receive a few lines from you.

Colonel Stuart did me the honour to escort me in his carriage to shew me Liverpool, and from thence back again to Warrington, where we parted.<sup>1</sup> In justice to my valuable wife, I must inform you she wrote to me,<sup>2</sup> that as I was so happy, she would not be so selfish as to wish me to return sooner than business absolutely required my presence. She made my clerk write to me a post or two after to the same purpose, by commission from her ; and this day a kind letter from her met me at the post-office here, acquainting me that she and the little ones were well, and expressing all their wishes for my return home. I am, more and more, my dear Sir,

Your affectionate

and obliged humble servant,

James Boswell.

<sup>1</sup> 'His regiment was afterwards ordered to Jamaica, where he accompanied it, and almost lost his life by the climate. This impartial order I should think a sufficient refutation of the idle rumour that "there was

still something behind the throne greater than the throne itself".'  
*Boswell*. As son of the Earl of Bute, Stuart might have evaded the order.

<sup>2</sup> *she wrote to me*, added in the second edition, but not in the first.

199a. To Samuel Johnson.<sup>1</sup>

My dear Sir,

Edinburgh, 22 November 1779.

I should have answered your letter of the 13th current sooner, had not the same article in it which required speed, been also the cause of retarding me. For my resolution was first to make inquiry concerning the family of Miss Doxy's lover; and then to be silent upon the subject if accounts should be unfavourable, but if on the contrary, to communicate the agreeable information. Having been confined to the house for a week with a severe cold which is a general complaint in this place at present, my inquiries were slower than if I had been running about. But I can now enable you to let Miss Porter and her fair young friend know that the family is well respected in Scotland and reckoned to be in good circumstances. The young gentleman's father is a gallant old Irish colonel, who married the heiress of a very decent estate in the County of Fife. I myself have no knowledge at all of the family. But I can depend upon the authority of my brother advocate, Lord Buchan's brother.<sup>2</sup>

It was very good in you to answer my letter from Carlisle so quickly. I observe that by not looking at my wife's letter to me at Carlisle<sup>3</sup> which I quoted, I made a sort of contradiction between it and her letter to me at Chester—'not wishing' and 'wishing'. Her words are, 'We all heartily rejoice on the prospect of your return'. It was pleasing to find her rejoice when my return was fixed, though she was generous enough not to wish me away from the happiness of Chester. I will not dispute with you why I should not be as happy at Edinburgh,

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the possession of C. B. Tinker. For Johnson's letter to which this is a reply, see *Life*, in 416. It reads in part as follows, 'I have sent a petition from Lucy Porter, with which I leave it to your discretion whether it is proper to comply. Return me her letter, which I have sent, that you may know the whole case, and not be seduced to any thing that you may afterwards repent. Miss Doxy per-

haps you know to be Mr. Garrick's, niece.' Johnson bids Boswell be pleased with his 'wife, and children, and studies and practice', asks how far Carlisle Cathedral is from Auchinleck and inquires after the health of Boswell's father.

<sup>2</sup> Hon. Thomas Erskine, youngest brother of the Earl of Buchan, for whom see *Life*, II. 173, n. 1.

<sup>3</sup> In the MS. *to me at Carlisle* is inserted above the line.

or even at Ulubrae <sup>1</sup> (as my father's motto upon his house bears) as at Chester; but will endeavour to do as well as I can. My wife and children engage my affections very agreeably. My practise promises well this winter; and I find myself better disposed to study than usual. I read yesterday with much satisfaction a publication in 1776 which the Archdeacon of Carlisle lent me, Io. Frid. Blumenbachii M.D. et Prof. Goeting. *De Generis Humani Varietate Nativa Liber*.<sup>2</sup> The learned, ingenious and orthodox authour maintains the unity of human-kind with very good reasoning, supported by innumerable authorities and some observations of his own, refuting, as he goes along, several writers who have adopted a different system. Our Kames and Monboddo <sup>3</sup> are *trimmed*, as the phrase is. The treatise is worth translating.

Carlisle is distant from Auchinleck scarcely a hundred miles. I know I can with ease reach it in a day from home. If I set out early on a Saturday morning, I can be at Carlisle that night, have a good sleep, rise well next morning, and attend the solemn service of a High Festival in the cathedral; and if I please can be at home again on Monday night. So you see my comfort is more reasonable than you imagine.

I found my father better both in body and mind than he has been for several years. But a few days ago, he was seised with a cold, which has increased, and he has been twice blooded. Last night his pulse was at 95. But he has had a sweat to-day, his pulse has fallen, he is much easier, and I hope he is in the way of recovery, though I cannot but be under some apprehension. My wife sends you her compliments and I ever am

Your most faithful and affectionate

humble servant,

James Boswell <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See letter of 14 February 1783, below, p 315, n 1.

<sup>2</sup> The book passed into a third edition at Göttingen in 1795.

<sup>3</sup> That is, Henry Home, Lord Kames, author of *Sketches of the History of Man*, and James Burnet, Lord Monboddo, author of the

*Origin of Language and Antient Metaphysics*. The former maintained that virtue was natural to man, the latter believed in the origin of mankind from brutes, and asserted that the orang-outang was man in his primitive state.

<sup>4</sup> See Johnson, *Letters* 2. 129.

200. To the Bishop of Derry<sup>1</sup>

My Lord,

Edinburgh, 15 December 1779.

I am afraid your Lordship and I differ as much in Irish politics as I found, from your Lordship's conversation in London last autumn, we differ in American politics. As I never could believe that a majority of our fellow subjects on the other side of the Atlantic would choose to leave their property at the mercy of the representatives of the King's subjects in this island, neither can I believe that all Ireland, Dublin excepted, would be for a union with Great Britain. When I was in Ireland ten years ago, a very sensible man, addressing himself to me as a Scotchman, said, 'We are bad enough in this country, but, thank God, we are not so bad as you are. We have still our own Parliament'. The noble exertions of the Irish this winter sufficiently confirms this remark. At any rate, my Lord, I cannot help being clearly of opinion that the capital of Ireland would suffer sadly by an union. Whether Scotland has been benefited by our union with England is to me a problematical question depending upon a variety of enquiries and probabilities. As Sir George Saville said, when Wedderburn boasted of what he had gained by his return to the court party, 'This house knows what he has lost'. Scotland, we know, has lost her spirit—I may say her existence, for she is absorbed in her great and rich sister kingdom. But sure I am, that Edinburgh has been grievously nipped in its growth by depriving us of our Parliament, and all its concomitant fostering influence, and we are now placed

Far from the sun and summer gale<sup>2</sup> . . .

<sup>1</sup> From Percy Fitzgerald, *Life of Boswell*, i. 227. The recipient was Frederick Augustus Hervey, who succeeded to the earldom of Bristol in the month in which this letter was written. He took a sincere and intelligent interest in political affairs and exerted himself to promote the welfare of the Irish people. Fitz-

gerald asserts, without giving any authority for his statements, that Boswell met the Bishop in London in 1779, that they discussed the American Revolution, and that Hervey asked Boswell for statistics regarding the increase of houses in Edinburgh since the Union.

<sup>2</sup> Gray, *Progress of Poesy*, line 83.

To ascribe<sup>1</sup> to the union such improvements as would have happened without it, is an enthusiasm no better founded than that of a worthy old lady, a Jacobite aunt of mine, who said, 'There had been no black cock in Annandale since the Revolution'.

Let us, my Lord, be satisfied to live on good and equal terms with our sovereign's people of Ireland, as we might have done with our sovereign's people of America, had they been allowed to enjoy *their* parliaments or assemblies, as Ireland enjoys hers, and, instead of calling the Irish 'a deluded people', and attempting to grasp them in our paws, let us admire their spirit. A Scotchman might preach on union to them, as a fox who has lost his tail. But your Lordship is an Englishman, and brother to the Earl of Bristol. I have the honour to be your Lordship's most obedient, humble servant.

James Boswell.

## 201. To the Reverend William Temple

My dear Temple,

Edinburgh, 4 January 1780.

Again an unaccountable cessation of our correspondence! But it would be foolish to employ a single sentence in writing about such a mental *défaillance* as both of us have so often experienced.

From London, after an excellent fortnight there, I accompanied Colonel Stuart to Chester,<sup>2</sup> to which town his Reg't was ordered from Leeds; and *there* I passed another fortnight in mo<rtal> felicity. I had from my earliest years a love for the military life; and there <is> really in it an animation and relish of existence, which I have never found amongst any other set of men, except players, with whom you know I once lived a great deal. At the mess of Col Stuart's regiment I was quite *the great man*, as we used to say; and I was at the same time all joyous and gay. Such was my *home* at Chester. But I had

<sup>1</sup> 'Turning to the statistics which he had been asked for, he admits that there had been a good many new-built houses in Edinburgh.'

*Fitzgerald.*

<sup>2</sup> See letter of 22 October 1779, p. 291.

the good fortune to be known to the Bishop,<sup>1</sup> who is one of the most distinguished prelates for piety and eloquence, and one of the most pleasing men in social life that you can imagine. His palace was open to me morning, noon, and night; and I was liberally entertained at his hospitable board. At Chester, too, I found Dean Smith,<sup>2</sup> the translator of Longinus, with whom you and I were so well acquainted, when we were studying under Mr. John Stevenson. I was surprised to find him; for I somehow had imagined that he was an ancient English authour, comparatively speaking. He is very old; but is quite cheerful, and full of anecdotes. He lives very retired, with a dissagreeable wife; and they told me I was the only man who had been in the deanery for a long time. I found, too, at Chester Mr. Falconer,<sup>3</sup> <a> gentleman of fortune and extraordinary learning and knowledge, who is preparing a new edition of Strabo, at the desire of the University of Oxford. He was exceedingly obliging to me. But I must not give you a transcript of my Chester journal which contains one of the most agreeable portions of my existence.<sup>4</sup> The curiosity of the town itself and the beauty of its environs entertained me.<sup>5</sup> It is the winter residence of a great many genteel families. It has a Theatre Royal, and a very elegant assembly-room. I never found myself so well received anywhere. The young ladies there were delightful, and many of them with capital fortunes. Had I been a batchelor, I should certainly have paid my addresses to a Chester lady.

Since my return home, I was seized with a severe cold which was very general here, and was confined some days to bed, and a week to the house. Your last letter was a comfort to me, in my indisposition; and indeed I should have sooner acknowledged the favour. I have been all this session troubled with a lameness from an inconsiderable cause, the nail of one of my great toes having grown into the flesh, and inflamed it. I am

<sup>1</sup> Beilby Porteus.

his nephew.

<sup>2</sup> William Smith (1711-87). His translation of Longinus, which Boswell and Temple had used in their school-days, appeared first in 1739.

<sup>4</sup> The visit is similarly dismissed in *Life*, iii. 413.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Falconer (1738-92); the edition of Strabo was published by

<sup>5</sup> 'Chester pleases my fancy more than any town I ever saw' *Life*, iii. 413.

at present confined by it, our first surgeon having undertaken to cure <1>t.

I wish I could give you any satisfactory account of my studies. I have done little at Greek. Lord Monboddo's *Ancient Metaphysics*,<sup>1</sup> which I am reading carefully, helps me to recover that language. But he is not an agreeable writer. His conversation is full of learning, but by much too odd and positive, and *acharné* against modern manners. I really think my *Hypochondriack*<sup>2</sup> goes on wonderfully well. But how inconsiderable are both you and I in comparison with what we used to hope we should be. Yet your learning, and your *Memoirs* set you far above the common run of educated men. And *son pittore anche io*.<sup>3</sup> I, too, in several respects have attained to superiority. But we both want solidity and force of mind, such as we observe in those who rise in active life.

My mind is at present in a state of tranquillity, or rather good insensibility. I have neither elevation nor gayety; but I am easy. My father was this winter seised with a fever. His pulse was at 95; and he was in danger. But he has recovered wonderfully, and is now again as well as he has been for several years. But he is sadly influenced by his second wife; and I cannot interfere, however galling it is to see him estranged from me and my family.

My wife's nephews stood so much in need of my assistance, that I have advanced between seven and eight hundred pounds for them, which I have borrowed at £5 *per cent*. A demand is now made upon me which I *must* answer early in February; and I must by no means inform my father. May I beg of you, my dearest friend, to remit me £200 for which I will send you my bill?<sup>4</sup> Pray do it, if you possibly can, for I am sadly put

<sup>1</sup> The first volume of this work had appeared in the preceding year.

<sup>2</sup> Since October 1777, Boswell had printed a monthly essay in the *London Magazine*, entitling the series *The Hypochondriack*

<sup>3</sup> The traditional words of Correggio on seeing for the first time Raphael's *Saint Cecilia*.

<sup>4</sup> At this point there has been erased from the manuscript the following sentence, which, however, is still legible, 'At any rate, I trust that you will remit me what you owe me, as I am obliged to collect all that I can scrape together.' It is impossible to say whether the erasure is Boswell's or not. I incline to think that it is



to it. If you can lodge a credit for me in London it will do. I am sure from our mutual confidence you will do what you can; and pray write by return of post. I shall soon write to you again.

Ever yours most warmly,

J. B.

## 202. To Samuel Johnson<sup>1</sup>

My dear Sir,

Edinburgh, 29 April 1780.

This will be delivered to you by my brother David, on his return from Spain. You will be glad to see the man who vowed to 'stand by the old castle of Auchinleck, with heart, purse, and sword;' that romantick family solemnity devised by me, of which you and I talked with complacency upon the spot. I trust that twelve years of absence have not lessened his feudal attachment; and that you will find him worthy of being introduced to your acquaintance. I have the honour to be, with affectionate veneration, my dear Sir,

Your most faithful humble servant,

James Boswell.

## 203. To Samuel Johnson<sup>2</sup>

24 August <1780>.

My brother David and I find the long indulged fancy of our comfortable meeting again at Auchinleck, so well realised, that it in some degree confirms the pleasing hope of *O! præclarum diem*<sup>3</sup> in a future state.

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, III. 433. Boswell adds, very agreeable man, and speaks no 'Johnson received him very politely, Scotch "'

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, III. 439. At this point in the *Life* Boswell combines extracts from three of his letters to Johnson, dated 24 August, 6 September, and 1 October, respectively. I have separated them under these various dates in what seems to have been the original order.

<sup>3</sup> Cicero, *De Senectute*, last chapter.

I beg

I beg that you may never again harbour a suspicion of my indulging a peevish humour, or playing tricks; you will recollect that when I confessed to you, that I had once been intentionally silent to try your regard, I gave you my word and honour that I would<sup>1</sup> not do so again.

I rejoice to hear of your good state of health; I pray God to continue it long. I have often said, that I would willingly have ten years added to my life, to have ten taken from yours; I mean, that I would be ten years older to have you ten years younger. But let me be thankful for the years during which I have enjoyed your friendship, and please myself with the hopes of enjoying it many years to come in this state of being, trusting always, that in another state, we shall meet never to be separated. Of this we can form no notion; but the thought, though indistinct, is delightful, when the mind is calm and clear.

The riots in London were certainly horrible; but you give me no account of your own situation, during the barbarous anarchy. A description of it by DR. JOHNSON would be a great painting<sup>2</sup>; you might write another *London, a Poem*.

## 204. To the Reverend William Temple

My dear Temple, Auchinleck, 3 September 1780.

To bed I will not go this night till I have written to you, if not a whole letter, at least a good part of one; for indeed it is with wonder and regret that I think of so many days having elapsed without my thanking you for your two letters after your return from your jaunt of disappointment. What unaccountable indolence seises us at times. We put off from day to day the writing to a most intimate friend, yet in the midst of all this procrastination how much do we do that might be let alone.

I was much dissatisfied that you did not come to me last summer as I expected; and worthy Johnston joined with me.

<sup>1</sup> *Should* in the first edition

the Gordon Riots. For this reason

<sup>2</sup> Boswell prints in the *Life* (iii. 428 ff.) the extracts from Johnson's letters to Mrs. Thrale which refer to

he adds to this letter the note, 'I had not then seen his letters to Mrs Thrale.'

But by the accounts which you give, I must pity you for the uneasiness which you have suffered. Well can I figure, my dear friend, your restlessness and vexation, first in London and then in Cambridge. But I cannot help thinking you in the wrong when you complain that you could not study in London; for in my opinion a man may pursue any literary inquiry there with the utmost advantage in every respect. In London one may find, I suppose, every book that can be found anywhere; and one is as much master of his time there as it is possible to be; so that I conclude your not studying in London was owing to some indisposition in your mind or body. Your want of modern books at Cambridge was a *real* hindrance. Often do I upbraid and look down upon myself when, in contemplation of the heights of learning to which one may attain, I view my own inferiority, and think how much many others and, amongst them, you, Temple, are above me. Yet, on the other hand, when I consider what vexations you suffer from which I am free, I am inclined to quiet myself. 'Much study is a weariness to the flesh', says the Wise Man. Now if there is upon the whole more pain than pleasure in advancing far into literature, would you advise one to do it?

I am glad that you had two agreeable interviews with Hurd.\* But I do not understand that you dined with him. Should not a Bishop be given to hospitality? I hope to see your journal that you kept. You shall see all my volumes when you come to Scotland. Let us resolve that if God is pleased to allow us life and health, we shall without fail have a meeting in London next spring. I am sorry that like myself you have not the art of oeconomy, so as to be laying up something handsom every year, when your income is, as I suppose, £500 *per annum*. All I shall say as to your small debt to me is, that a remittance of it to me in my present situation whenever you can *easily* spare the money, would be an *aid*.—Now, Temple, take care, I am not *dunning* you. I am writing with candid frankness to my most intimate friend, who when his fortune was diminished by his generosity to his father, offered to let me have a loan

\* Richard Hurd (1720–1808), then Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, later (1781) Bishop of Worcester.

of £1,000 to purchase a commission in the Guards.<sup>1</sup> O my freind, let there never be the least reserve or possibility of misunderstanding between us —And now good night.

4 September.

I am just got up, and having offered up my prayers to God, and read a chapter of the New Testament I resume my letter to you. Drowsiness has<sup>2</sup> hung heavy upon me last night, when I was willing to suppose more pain than pleasure in advancing far into literature. Men of delicate nerves may at times suffer from their knowledge. But they would suffer by something else, and even *their* enjoyments from knowledge counterballance their sufferings. And it is to be hoped that a period is coming when they will have a more full relish of their intellectual acquisitions. And men of sound and vigorous minds have high satisfaction in their knowledge. Dr. Johnson maintains that a man is truly happy in proportion to his knowledge. I myself, who know so little, can judge from experience of the pleasure of knowledge from what I do know. What must be the pleasure of some men whose enlarged minds and retentive memories possess large extensive funds of various knowledge provided they have vivacity enough to enjoy it?

Edinburgh, 3 November 1780.

Only think my dear freind, of this letter's being begun on the 3rd of Septr, continued a little on the 4th of that month, and now going to be concluded (as I hope at least it will) on the 3rd of Novr; so that it has lain and travelled in its imperfect state, or rather its incipient state, two months all but one day. I know you will forgive this, though you must regret it, as I do most sincerely.

My brother David arrived at Edinburgh on the 12 June, and lodged in my house. We went to Auchinleck in August, and were four weeks there with our father. David and I then returned to Edinburgh where he staid with us a few days, after which he went to London, and is now settling himself there, as a merchant and banker. He is a sensible, intelligent, accurate man, very formal and very prudent—in short, as

<sup>1</sup> See letter of 24 August 1768, p. 162.

<sup>2</sup> *Sic.*  
different

different from me in his manner and in his general way of thinking as you can suppose. But I trust he is a man of good principles. He was very happy in the romantick scenes of Auchinleck, and he thinks highly of London. But he is steady to business and his own interest, and no amusement will divert him from essential advantage. I hope he will do well in London. He says he will probably never make a great fortune, because he will not be adventurous. But he will get what he can by assiduity and œconomy. He told me that soon after settling in Spain he gave up all philosophising, and applied himself to real business. He says he found out that men who speculate on life, as you and I do, are not successful in substantial concerns. He is in the right, I am affraid. If you have money matters to transact in London, I beg you may employ him. Write to him under cover to Dilly, till he gives you an address.

The subject of *speculating* brings to my mind the difficulty, never to be resolved in this state of being, which you mention in the first of your two letters now before me. Could not infinite wisdom and goodness have made us less miserable, if not more happy? We must be content to 'wait the great teacher Death, and God adore!'<sup>1</sup>

It is to me clear *a priori* that your question may be answered in the affirmative, supposing us to be such machines as the fatalists maintain. But, as I think it nobler to be a free agent, struggling as we must, from some sad mysterious causes, I comfort myself with the Christian revelation of our being in a state of purification, and that we shall in course of time attain to felicity. It is delightful, Temple, to look forward to the period when you and I shall enjoy what we now imagine. In the mean time, let us be patient, and do what good we can.

I could not help smiling at the expostulation which you suggest to me to try with my father. It would do admirably with some fathers. But it would make mine much worse; for he cannot bear that his son should talk with him as a man. I can only lament his unmelting coldness to my wife and children; for I fear it is hopeless to think of his ever being more affectionate towards them. Yet it must be acknowledged

<sup>1</sup> Pope, *Essay on Man*, i. 92.

that

that his paying £1,000 of my debt some years ago was a large bounty. He allows me £300 a year. But I find that what I gain by my practice and that sum together will not support my family. I have now two sons and three daughters. I am in hopes that my father will augment my allowance to £400 a year. I was indeed very imprudent in expressing my extreme aversion to his second marriage. But since it took place, I am conscious of having behaved to himself and his lady with such respectful attention, and imposed such a restraint upon myself as is truly meritorious. The woman is very implacable; and I imagine it is hardly possible that she can ever be my friend. She, however, behaves much better to the children than their grandfather does. We are all to dine at my father's today. He is better now than he has been for several years.

Your counsel to me to set my mind at rest, and be content with promotion in Scotland, is, I believe, very wise. My brother David enforced it earnestly. If my father lives a few years longer, *age* will, I suppose, fix me here without any question. For to embark in a new sphere, when one is much after forty, is not advisable. Yet, my dear Temple, ambition to be in Parliament or in the metropolis is very allowable. Perhaps my exalted notions of publick situation are fallacious; for I begin to think that true elevation is to be acquired from study and thinking; and that when one is used to the most eminent places, they become familiar and insipid and perhaps vexatious. David says my chief object should be the augmenting, improving, and beautifying Auchinleck; and that I may do all that to more advantage by having a smaller income in Scotland than a larger in London. We must see what time will present. There is a fine *fame* in being distinguished in London, were it only in literary society as I am; and I could educate my children to great advantage there.

What are your studies at present? What are you writing? I must again and again renew my wish for the publication of your *green book*. It must no doubt have many additions since I saw it. Short, elegant characters of books are to me most engaging next to characters of men; and yours pleased me exceedingly.

Nichols

Nichols<sup>1</sup> was some days here in his way home. His foppery is unbecoming in a clergyman. But I was really much offended with him one night when he supped with me McLaurin,<sup>2</sup> who, I fear, is an infidel, was the only other person in company. Nichols gave a ludicrous account of his ordination. Said he applied to the Archbishop of York (Drummond)<sup>3</sup> who asked him what books he had read on divinity. 'Why, truly, my Lord,' said he, 'I must tell you frankly, none at all, though I have read other books enough'. 'O very well', said the Archbishop, 'I'll give you a letter to one who will examine you properly'.—Accordingly he got a letter to a clergyman in London, who examined him—and, to cut short this disagreeable story, Nichols said that he did not well understand what was meant when desired to write on the necessity of a Mediator—that he wrote some strange stuff, as fast as he would do a card to a lady, and that he had never read the Greek New Testament. He made a very profane farce of the whole. McLaurin laughed exceedingly. I could only be grave. For, if I had argued on the impropriety of the story, the matter would have been made worse while they were two to one. Now my dear friend, I do not believe, in the first place, that the Archbishop would be so shamefully unfaithful to his awful trust. If he had been so, it was dishonourable in Nichols to tell. Upon either supposition, Nichols was avowing himself a cheat. Neither could it be true that he was so grossly ignorant as he alleged he was.—I shall never receive him again into my house.—What I have now told you happened on a Saturday night. I called on him next day to have talked to him of it; but did not find him. I sent on Monday morning to know if he was gone, that I might still see him. He was just stepping into the postchaise to set out for his *living*. Perhaps it was as well that I did not see him. You know I speak pretty strongly. And why should I take any concern about him?

<sup>1</sup> The Reverend Norton Nicholls, an intimate friend of Temple, Gray, and Walpole. Walpole, who called him the Abbé, gives abundant evidence in his *Letters* of Nicholls's levity and of his tendency to gossip, and refers (x.

288) to his 'bacchanalian disposition'.

<sup>2</sup> John MacLaurin (1734–96), afterwards Lord Dreghorn. He is several times mentioned in the *Life*.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Hay Drummond, who was Archbishop of York, 1761–76.

It pleases me that you express concern for the death of my poor uncle, Dr Boswell.<sup>1</sup> He was a very good scholar, knew a great many things, had an elegant taste, and was very affectionate. But he had no conduct. His money was all gone; and, do you know, he was not confined to one woman? He had a strange kind of religion. But, I flatter myself, he will be e'er long, if he is not allready, in Heaven.

*The state of the nation* is indeed wretched; nor do I see any prospect of our being better. It is shocking to think that a new Parliament is returned which will be as subservient to ministry as the last. I agree with you sincerely, my freind, that it would be better to be a Lord of Session, with an unblemished character, than a peer and Lord Chief Justice, by such means as these promotions have been attained. I would not have been one of those who rejected the petitions from America<sup>2</sup>—no not for half the British Empire. Yet I am a Tory still; for I distinguish between our *limited monarch*, and a *despotick ministry*.

I again can only express hopes of studying. I would fain recover Greek, or indeed learn it; for I never had much.<sup>3</sup> Our session approaches. I shall then be harrassed with unimportant business. *Qui fit Maecenas*<sup>4</sup> must ever occur to us. I should think you might be very happy with so good an income, the sacred duties of your profession, and the studies which you can follow with so much success. I enjoyed extraordinary good spirits till yesterday. I am affraid a fit of hypochondria is come, and that it may last some time. Pray let me hear from you oftener. My best compliments to Mrs. Temple and love to your young family. Let us be pleased. We are both well, if we would think so.

Adieu.

Most affectionately yours,

J. B.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. John Boswell, for whom see *Tour to the Hebrides*, p 394.

<sup>2</sup> Boswell refers to the petitions of the colonists for the redress of grievances, sent to the House of Commons before the outbreak of the

Revolution. 'Our repeated petitions', reads the Declaration of Independence, 'have been answered only by repeated injury.'

<sup>3</sup> See *Life*, iii. 405.

<sup>4</sup> Horace, *Satires*, i. l. 1



205. To Samuel Johnson<sup>1</sup>

6 September &lt;1780&gt;.

I am charmed with your condescending affectionate expression, 'let us keep each other's kindness by all the means in our power;' my revered Friend! how elevating is it to my mind, that I am found worthy to be a companion to Dr. Samuel Johnson! All that you have said in grateful praise of Mr. Walmsley,<sup>2</sup> I have long thought of you; but we are both Tories, which has a very general influence upon our sentiments. I hope that you will agree to meet me at York, about the end of this month; or if you will come to Carlisle, that would be better still, in case the Dean be there. Please to consider, that to keep each other's kindness, we should every year have that free and intimate communication of mind which can be had only when we are together. We should have both our solemn and our pleasant talk.

206. To Samuel Johnson<sup>1</sup>

1 October &lt;1780&gt;.

I write now for the third time, to tell you that my desire for our meeting this autumn, is much increased. I wrote to 'Squire Godfrey Bosville, my Yorkshire chief,<sup>3</sup> that I should perhaps, pay him a visit, as I was to hold a conference with Dr. Johnson at York. I give you my word and honour that I said not a word of his inviting you, but he wrote to me as follows:—

'I need not tell you I shall be happy to see you here the latter end of this month, as you propose; and I shall likewise be in hopes that you will persuade Dr. Johnson to finish the conference here. It will add to the favour of your own company, if you prevail upon such an associate, to assist your observations. I have often been entertained with his writings, and

<sup>1</sup> See letter of 24 August 1780, Johnson makes no reference to the note 2, p 302.

<sup>2</sup> For Gilbert Walmsley, see *Life*, i. 81. Walmsley was a Whig.

<sup>3</sup> See letter of 1 February 1767 above. In his reply to this letter *Life*, iii. 441.

I once belonged to a club<sup>1</sup> of which he was a member, and I never spent an evening there, but I heard something from him well worth remembering.'

We have thus, my dear Sir, good comfortable quarters in the neighbourhood of York, where you may be assured we shall be heartily welcome. I pray you then resolve to set out; and let not the year 1780 be a blank in our social calendar, and in that record of wisdom and wit, which I keep with so much diligence, to your honour, and the instruction and delight of others.

### 207. To Mrs. David Garrick<sup>1</sup>

General Paoli's, Southaudley Street,

16 April 1781.

Mr. Boswell presents his best compliments to Mrs. Garrick. He should be very sorry to intrude himself upon her. But if<sup>2</sup> a visit from him would not be disagreeable, she will please let him know at what time he may have the honour of waiting on her. He owns his wish to pay his respects to Mrs. Garrick, both on account of her own merit, and from his sincere regard for the memory of Him 'on whose like we shall not look again', of whose gay and freindly letters Mr. Boswell has a good many, which he fondly preserves as brilliant gems in his literary cabinet.

### 208. To Mrs. Thrale<sup>1</sup>

Dear Madam,

Edinburgh, 25 May 1782.

Having gone upon a ramble into the country, the letters which came to me in my absence were kept at my house here till my return, which has occasioned my not receiving, till long after its date, your letter of the 13th current.

<sup>1</sup> Nothing further is known of the relations between Johnson and Bosville. It can hardly have been the Ivy Lane Club of which Bosville was a member, or Boswell would have taken the trouble to get from his 'chief' more information about

that organization than he was able to record in the *Life* (1. 190).

<sup>2</sup> From the original in the possession of C. B. Tinker.

<sup>3</sup> MS, 'if it'

<sup>4</sup> From the original in the Adam Collection.

The account which it gives me of Dr. Johnson<sup>1</sup> alarms me to the heart; and you, whose veneration and affection for him are in unison with mine, will conceive what I feel. It distresses me that I submitted to his forcible, but too cool advice not to come to London this spring.<sup>2</sup> For now my practice as a lawyer in the Court of Session must detain me here till August, when I am resolved to be with him, God willing.<sup>3</sup>

In the mean time, it will be doing me a kindness, which I shall most gratefully acknowledge, if you will be pleased once a week to let me know by a single line how he recovers. I avoid strong expressions. I only refer you to yourself to judge of me. I ardently wish for any opportunity to prove with how much regard I have the honour to be

My dear Madam,  
Your much obliged  
humble servant,  
James Boswell.

## 209. To Mrs. Thrale<sup>4</sup>

Dear Madam,

Edinburgh, 9 July 1782.

Last night's post brought me your kind letter informing me of Dr. Johnson's being so much better since his jaunt to Oxford<sup>5</sup>. It is needless to tell you what joy it gave me. I kissed the subscription, 'H. L. Thrale', with fervency. The good news elated me; and I was at the same time pleasingly interested by the tender wish which you express to relieve my anxiety as

<sup>1</sup> Johnson's account of the state of his health is given in the *Life*, iv. 151, in a letter which he wrote in reply to one addressed to him by Boswell about this time, which has not been preserved.

<sup>2</sup> 'Whether I did right in dissuading you from coming to London this spring, I will not determine. . . . I have scarcely been well for a single week. I might have received comfort from your kindness; but you would have seen me afflicted and,

perhaps, found me peevish' Johnson to Boswell, 3 June 1782, *Life*, iv. 152.

<sup>3</sup> Boswell did not visit London this year, for his intention of doing so was prevented by the death of his father in August.

<sup>4</sup> From the original in the possession of W. K. Bixby, Esq.

<sup>5</sup> The account of the Oxford visit may be read in a series of letters by Johnson to Mrs. Thrale written between 11 June and 17 June. *Letters of Johnson*, ii. 256 ff.

much

much as you can My dear Madam, from the day that I first had the pleasure to meet you, when I jump't into your coach, not I hope from impudence, but from that agreeable kind of attraction which makes one forget ceremony, I have invariably thought of you with admiration and gratitude. Were I to make out a chronological account of all the happy hours which I owe to you, I should appear under great debt, and debt of a peculiar nature, for a generous mind cannot be discharged of it by the creditor.

May I presume still more upon your kindness, and beg that you may write to me at more length? I do not mean to put you to a great deal of trouble; but you write so easily that you might by a small expence of time give me much pleasure. Anecdotes of our literary or gay freinds, but particularly of our illustrious Imlac, would delight me.

I hope you have not adopted a notion which I once heard Dr. Johnson mention, that for fear of tempting to publication it was his study to write letters as ill, I think, or as dryly (or jejunely) I am not sure of the very phrase, but it meant as insipidly as he could.<sup>1</sup> He said this last year at Mr Dilly's in company with Mr. Wilkes, if I am not mistaken. I suggested to him that his writing so would most certainly make his letter be preserved and published; for it would be a choice curiosity to see Dr Johnson write ill.

Behold a miracle! instead of wit,  
See two dull lines by Stanhope writ.<sup>2</sup>

My wife is a good deal better, though still sadly distressed. But I flatter myself that the symptoms of that dismal disease, a consumption, are disappearing I experience a comfort after my late apprehension, which raises my soul in pious thoughts. I have the honour to be, my dear Madam,

Your most obliged, faithful, humble servant,  
James Boswell.

<sup>1</sup> The conversation here referred to took place 8 May 1781. See *Life*, iv. 102. For Johnson's opinion of printed letters see *Letters of Johnson*, II. 52.

<sup>2</sup> The well-known impromptu epigram of Dr. Edward Young, *Lines written with the Diamond Pencil of Lord Chesterfield*. Spence, *Anecdotes*, Singer's ed., 1858, p. 288.

210. To Mrs. Thrale<sup>1</sup>

Dear Madam,

Edinburgh, 20 December 1782.

It is strange that I am not yet old enough not to give credit to what I read in the newspapers. I did believe that you was gone or just going abroad; and I was selfish enough to be sorry for it. But a letter from our most respected friend, Dr. Johnson, has informed me that you and three misses are in Argyll Street. I hope to have the pleasure of finding you there in March. In the mean time, may I again intreat to hear from you how Dr. Johnson does, from time to time? I express myself inelegantly. But I trust you think me worthy of that attention; and I know I am grateful for your goodness.

Every body here is running after *Cecilia*; <sup>2</sup> and I am vain of telling that I have had the pleasure of being frequently in Miss Burney's company at Mrs. Thrale's.

I am, dear Madam,

Your obliged and faithful humble servant,

James Boswell.

211. To John Wilkes<sup>3</sup>

Dear Sir,

Edinburgh, 14 February 1783.

I did expect that you would before now have sent me a peace-offering of wit, for having *put me in fear* of Dr. Johnson's anger at Mr. Dilly's <sup>4</sup> But that good and hospitable bookseller informs me that the Chamberlain of the City of London insists that he is entitled to hear first from the Laird of Auchinleck.<sup>5</sup> I therefore, Sir, now *demand* what we in the law language call a *solatium*, not of shining ore, but of brilliant pleasantry.

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the Adam Collection.

<sup>2</sup> Miss Burney's *Cecilia* had appeared in the previous summer. The only account given by Mme. D'Arblay of Boswell's visits to Streatham is in the *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*. See Tinker, *Dr. Johnson and Fanny Burney*, p. 221.

<sup>3</sup> From the original in the British Museum.

<sup>4</sup> As Boswell had not been in London since June 1781, this can only refer to the dinner of 8 May 1781, the second at which Boswell brought Johnson and Wilkes together. (*Life*, iv. 101 ff.)

<sup>5</sup> Wilkes became City Chamberlain in 1779; Boswell became Master of Auchinleck in August 1782, by the death of his father, whose eldest son he was.

As I am now Master of *Ulubraë*,<sup>1</sup> of which we have often talked, I hope you will venture to pay it a visit. I will insure your safety. I hope to be with you in London next month, when we shall settle the time.

In Sir Alexander Dick's large collection of letters from eminent and ingenious men, to which I have free access, I find a great many from Dr. Armstrong, some of which are very good. It is curious to observe with what fond praise he writes of you at one period, and with what attribitious rage at another. Sir Alexander, who is now in his 80th year, is very little changed from what you have seen him. I never saw a finer old age. He remembers you with lively pleasure.

Do answer my demand without delay *You deserve no days of grace.* Pray make my compliments acceptable to Miss Wilkes, and believe me to be, dear Sir,

Most socially yours,  
James Boswell.

## 212. To John Wilkes<sup>1</sup>

No. 22 Poultry, 26 March 1783.

Mr. Boswell presents his compliments to Mr. Wilkes. An invitation to dinner will not do. The Laird of Auchinleck is not hungry; and he does not want wine, but wit. In short, he must have a pleasant apology for *putting him in fear* of Dr. Johnson's displeasure, on account of a certain epithalamium.—Or there must be an end to a certain classical and gay connection.

<sup>1</sup> Above the main entrance of Auchinleck House is carved this inscription from the *Epistles* of Horace (1. 11. 30):

Quod petis hic est,  
Est Ulubris, animus si te non deficit  
aequus.

Ulubraë, a town of Latium near the Pontine marshes, a byword among the Latin authors for a place of disagreeable remoteness. This had evidently been a subject for the

'classical' jests of Wilkes and Boswell, who had nicknamed Auchinleck, *Ulubraë*.

<sup>2</sup> From the original in the British Museum. The letter is written from Charles Dilly's. Boswell had arrived in London on 20 March. He is aiming to engage Wilkes in correspondence. See the previous letter for a similar reference to Johnson's displeasure, the exact nature of which is by no means clear.

Dear

213. To John Wilkes<sup>1</sup>

General Paoli's, Southaudley Street, 12 May &lt;1783&gt;

Dear Sir,

As I undertook to be the negociator of the dinner at your house—the High Sherrif of Bedfordshire, his brother Mr. Charles Dilly, and an old Vesuvius fellow traveller—I beg to know if next Sunday the 18th will be convenient for the Chamberlain of London? <sup>2</sup> This is *omnia magna loquens*. <sup>3</sup> My best compliments to Miss Wilkes. She knows my conditional threatening that you should have been *mon beau père*. Ah qu'il est beau! <sup>4</sup> Vale et me ama.

James Boswell.

214. To John Wilkes<sup>1</sup>

Wednesday, 21 &lt;May 1783&gt;.

Mr. Boswell's compliments to Mr. Wilkes. He rejoices to find he is so much better as to be abroad. He finds that it would not be unpleasant to Dr. Johnson to dine at Mr. Wilkes's. The thing would be so *curiously benignant*, it were a pity it should not take place. Nobody but Mr. Boswell should be asked to meet the Dr. Mr. Boswell goes for Scotland Friday the 30th. If then a card were sent to the Dr. for Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday without delay, it is to be hoped he would be fixed, and notice will be sent to Mr. Boswell.

The Dr. lives in Bolt Court, Fleet Street.

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the British Museum.

<sup>2</sup> The High Sheriff was John Dilly (1731-1806), brother of the booksellers; the 'Vesuvius fellow-traveller' is of course Boswell.

<sup>3</sup> Horace, *Satires*, 1. 3. 13. Boswell means that he is speaking with all possible formality, such as fits 'a classical connection'.

<sup>4</sup> Wilkes's ugliness is a common subject of jest with Boswell.

<sup>5</sup> From the original in the British

Museum. This letter, the one immediately preceding, and the next below, form a short series. Wilkes had evidently been indisposed on the 18th, and the dinner had been postponed. Meanwhile Boswell had conceived the notion of including Dr. Johnson among the guests, thus hoping to bring Johnson and Wilkes together for the third time. This was the most audacious of his plans, for it was his intention this time to take Johnson to Wilkes's own house.

Mr. Boswell

215. To John Wilkes<sup>1</sup>

Southaudley Street, Sunday, 25 May 1783

Mr. Boswell presents his best compliments to Mr. and Miss Wilkes, encloses Dr. Johnson's answer, and regrets much that so agreeable a meeting must be deferred till next year, as Mr. Boswell is to set out for Scotland in a few days. Hopes Mr. Wilkes will write to him there

## 216. To —

26 May 1783.

I have made inquiry in what manner you can send to the British Museum the blanket which served you as a sail during your very dangerous navigation. I am sorry that I am obliged to hurry away to Scotland without having waited upon you at Greenwich.

217. To Sir Alexander Dick, Baronet<sup>3</sup>

My dear Sir,

Vivat Rex, &lt;17 or 18 December 1783&gt;.

I have superscribed my note like a royal playbill. The flagitious bill to rob a chartered company and overwhelm his Majesty is thrown out in the House of Lords by a majority of 19.

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the British Museum. The enclosure, a card in Dr Johnson's handwriting, reads as follows:

Mr. Johnson returns thanks to Mr. and Miss Wilkes for their kind invitation, but he is engaged for Tuesday to Sir Joshua Reynolds, and for Wednesday to Mr Paradise.  
May 24, 1783.

<sup>2</sup> From the catalogue of Messrs. E. Myers & Son, July 1918. The recipient I cannot identify. I find no trace of such a blanket in the British Museum.

<sup>3</sup> From the original in the Public

Library of New York City The date is deduced from the rejection of Fox's India Bill (17 December 1783) by the House of Lords Boswell was probably writing from Edinburgh; he did not visit London this year. The rejection of the India Bill forms the chief topic of Boswell's *Letter to the People of Scotland on the Present State of the Nation*, which he printed before the end of the year. Boswell placed himself in the group which loudly contended that the proposed restraint of the East India Company was a blow at the royal prerogative. The letter was reprinted in 1784. Cf. *Life*, iv. 258.

I am



I am not well in health. But my spirit rejoiceth, and I am ever most cordially yours,

James Boswell.

Dr. Webster,<sup>1</sup> who is drinking coffee with me, joins in joy and compliments.

### 218. To Sir Alexander Dick, Baronet<sup>2</sup>

My dear Sir,

7 January 1784.

My *Letter to the People of Scotland* is to be had, to my certain knowledge, in at least *eight* shops.—I had one in reserve for your library, which I now send, and I beg you will do me the honour to give it a place. You will find it—though I say so—an excellent pamphlet. I did not read Pulteney's<sup>3</sup> till my own was printed; and I declare I like my own better. There is fine self-confidence for you. You will find I have more parliamentary knowledge than you supposed.

I shall be happy to see you tomorrow. *We* all join in wishing many good new years to *you* all. And I ever am most cordially yours,

James Boswell.

I was much obliged to you for Lady Balcarras's<sup>4</sup> letter. I will shew you an excellent one from Dr. Johnson.<sup>5</sup>

### 219. To Samuel Johnson<sup>6</sup>

8 January 1784.

I trust that you will be liberal enough to make allowance for my differing from you on two points (the Middlesex Election and

<sup>1</sup> Alexander Webster (1707–84). See *Life*, II. 269, note.

<sup>2</sup> From the original in the Public Library of New York City.

<sup>3</sup> William Pulteney, Esq., M.P., *Effects to be expected from the East India Bill upon the Constitution of Great Britain, if passed into a law*. London, 1783; pp. 47.

<sup>4</sup> Lady Anne Lindsay, Sir Alexander's grand-niece, who according to him, 'has a great deal of good

sense and wit'. She was the author of *Auld Robin Gray*.

<sup>5</sup> Written 24 December 1783. See *Life*, IV. 248.

<sup>6</sup> *Life*, IV. 259. 'I wrote to him, anxiously inquiring as to his health, and enclosing my *Letter to the People of Scotland, on the Present State of the Nation*.' See p. 4 for Boswell's references to the American Revolution and for his allusion to Dr. Johnson

the American War) when my general principles of government are according to your own heart, and when, at a crisis of doubtful event, I stand forth with honest zeal as an ancient and faithful Briton. My reason for introducing those two points was, that as my opinions with regard to them had been declared at the periods when they were least favourable, I might have the credit of a man who is not a worshipper of ministerial power.

## 220. To Sir Joshua Reynolds<sup>1</sup>

My dear Sir,

Edinburgh, 6 February 1784.

I long exceedingly to hear from you. Sir William Forbes<sup>2</sup> brought me good accounts of you, and Mr. Temple sent me very pleasing intelligence concerning the fair Palmeria.<sup>3</sup> But a line or two from yourself is the next thing to seeing you.

My anxiety about Dr. Johnson is truly great. I had a letter<sup>4</sup> from him within these six weeks, written with his usual acuteness and vigour of mind. But he complained sadly of the state of his health; and I have been informed since, that he is worse. I intend to be in London next month, chiefly to attend upon him with respectful affection. But in the mean time, it will be a great favour done me, if you, who know him so well, will be kind enough to let me know particularly how he is.

I hope Mr. Dilly conveyed to you my Letter on the State of the Nation *from the Author*. I know your political principles, and indeed your settled system of thinking upon civil society and subordination, to be according to my own heart. And therefore I doubt not you will approve of my honest zeal. But what monstrous effects of Party do we now see! I am really vexed at the conduct of some of our friends.<sup>5</sup>

Amidst the conflict, our friend of Port Elliot is with much

<sup>1</sup> From the original belonging to Mr. Rupert Colomb.

<sup>2</sup> Sir William Forbes of Pitligo (1739–1806), biographer of Beattie, member of the Literary Club, and Boswell's intimate friend and correspondent, and, after Boswell's death, guardian of his children.

<sup>3</sup> Mary Palmer, Sir Joshua's niece

and heiress, often referred to in the letters to Malone, below.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, iv. 248.

<sup>5</sup> 'The struggle between the late Coalition Ministry and the King and Pitt was still going on. Among those whom Boswell calls "our friends" was Burke.' *Hill*.

propriety created a Peer.<sup>1</sup> But why, O why, did he not obtain the title of Baron *Mahogany*?<sup>2</sup> Genealogists and Heralds would have had curious work of it, to explain and illustrate that title.

I ever am with sincere regard,

My dear Sir,

your affectionate

humble servant,

James Boswell.

## 221. To William Pitt<sup>3</sup>

(? February 1784).

My principles may appear to you too monarchical: but I know and am persuaded, they are not inconsistent with the true principles of liberty. Be this as it may, you, Sir, are now the Prime Minister, called by the Sovereign to maintain the rights of the Crown, as well as those of the people, against a violent faction. As such, you are entitled to the warmest support of every good subject in every department.

## 222. To Doctors Cullen, Hope, and Monro<sup>4</sup>

Dear Sir,

7 March 1784.

Dr. Johnson has been very ill for some time; and in a letter of anxious apprehension he writes to me, 'Ask your physicians about my case.'

<sup>1</sup> Edward Elot (1727-1804), created Baron Elot of St. Germans in 1784, a member of the Literary Club.

<sup>2</sup> At a dinner at Sir Joshua's in 1781 (*Life*, iv. 78), 'Mr. Elot mentioned a curious liquor peculiar to his country, which the Cornish fishermen drink. They call it *Mahogany*, and it is made of two parts gin and one part treacle, well beaten together. I begged to have some of it made, which was done with proper skill by Mr. Elot. I thought it very good liquor'

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, iv. 261 note. This is an

extract from a letter to the Prime Minister accompanying the pamphlet entitled, *A Letter to the People of Scotland on the Present State of the Nation*. An extract from Pitt's reply is printed in the *Life*, as well as Johnson's opinion of the pamphlet, 'It will certainly raise your character, though perhaps it may not make you a Minister of State.'

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, iv. 263. The recipients were 'three of the eminent physicians who had chairs in our celebrated school of medicine at Edinburgh'.

This,

This, you see, is not authority for a regular consultation : but I have no doubt of your readiness to give your advice to a man so eminent, and who, in his *Life of Garth*, has paid your profession a just and elegant compliment : ‘ I believe every man has found in physicians great liberality and dignity of sentiment, very prompt effusions of beneficence, and willingness to exert a lucrative art, where there is no hope of lucre.’

Dr. Johnson is aged seventy-four. Last summer he had a stroke of the palsy, from which he recovered almost entirely. He had, before that, been troubled with a catarrhus cough. This winter he was seized with a spasmodick asthma, by which he has been confined to his house for about three months. Dr. Brocklesby writes to me, that upon the least admission of cold, there is such a constriction upon his breast, that he cannot lie down in his bed, but is obliged to sit up all night, and gets rest and sometimes sleep, only by means of laudanum and syrup of poppies ; and that there are œdematous tumours on his legs and thighs. Dr. Brocklesby trusts a good deal to the return of mild weather. Dr. Johnson says, that a dropsy gains ground upon him ; and he seems to think that a warmer climate would do him good. I understand he is now rather better, and is using vinegar of squills. I am, with great esteem, dear Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

James Boswell.

## 223. To the Right Reverend Thomas Percy<sup>1</sup>

My dear Lord,

Edinburgh, 8 March 1784.

The heavy loss which your Lordship suffered by the death of your son, soon after my being entertained by your Lordship with very kind hospitality at Carlisle,<sup>2</sup> made it so difficult for me to write to you that I hope you will be good enough to

<sup>1</sup> From John Nichols, *Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century*, vii. 302.

<sup>2</sup> The visit referred to probably took place at the very end of May 1783, when Boswell returned to

Scotland after his visit to London, which ended 29 May 1783. He was accustomed to break his northward journey at Carlisle. Percy's only son, Henry, died in Italy in the spring or early summer of this year.

forgive

forgive my long delay of expressing my sincere thanks, and I beg your Lordship may at the same time be assured that none of your friends sympathised more with you in your distress. The consolations with which your Lordship's mind is stored have, I trust, had their benignant effect, so that we may again hope for the benefit of your literary labours

The state of the nation has for some time been such that in my opinion every good subject is called upon to defend the constitution by supporting the crown. I enclose a pamphlet which I have published on the subject, and which I am truly happy to find has had considerable influence. I rejoice that the Irish appear to be so loyal. If your Lordship thinks that my pamphlet will promote the laudable spirit, and any of the Dublin publishers choose to run the risk of reprinting it, I shall be glad to hear of its success<sup>1</sup>

Be so obliging, my dear Lord, as to let me hear from you, and tell me particularly how your lady and daughters like the new situation<sup>2</sup> in which you are placed. If you write soon, please to direct to me at Auchinleck, near Ayr, by Portpatrick. I intend to be in London about the end of this month,<sup>3</sup> chiefly to attend upon Dr. Johnson with respectful affection. He has for some time been very ill with dropsical and asthmatical complaints, which at his age are very alarming. I wish to publish, as a regale to him, a neat little volume, *The Praises of Dr. Samuel Johnson, by Contemporary Writers*.<sup>4</sup> It will be about the size of Selden's *Table Talk*, of which your Lordship made me a present, with an inscription on the blank leaf in front, which does me honour. It is placed in the library at Auchinleck. Will your Lordship take the trouble to send me a note of the writers you recollect have praised our much respected friend? My address when in London is at General Paoli's, Portman Square.

<sup>1</sup> The success of Boswell's pamphlet, which had encouraged him to publish it with an English imprint, led him also to hope that he might extend its circulation to Ireland, but he was disappointed. It will be seen from the ensuing letter that the Bishop paid no attention to the

suggestion.

<sup>2</sup> Percy was made Bishop of Dromore in 1782, but did not take up his residence in Ireland for many months.

<sup>3</sup> He did not arrive in London till 5 May.

<sup>4</sup> This was never published.

An edition of my pamphlet has been published in London and the first line of the advertisement was 'Reprinted for the People of England'. This should be adopted in Dublin, *mutato nomine*.

I ever am, my dear Lord,

Your Lordship's faithful humble servant,

James Boswell.

## 224. To Lord Thurlow<sup>1</sup>

General Paoli's, Upper Seymour Street, Portman Square,  
My Lord, 24 June 1784.

Dr. Samuel Johnson, though wonderfully recovered from a complication of dangerous illness, is by no means well, and I have reason to think that his valuable life cannot be preserved long, without the benignant influence of a southern climate.

It would therefore be of very great moment were he to go to Italy before winter sets in, and I know he wishes it much. But the objection is that his pension of £300 a year would not be sufficient to defray his expence, and make it convenient for Mr. Sastres,<sup>2</sup> an ingenious and worthy native of that country, and a teacher of Italian here, to accompany him.

As I am well assured of your Lordship's regard for Dr. Johnson I presume, without his knowledge, so far to indulge my anxious concern for him, as to intrude upon your Lordship with this suggestion, being persuaded that, if a representation of the matter were to be made to his Majesty by proper authority, the royal bounty would be extended in a suitable manner.

Your Lordship, I cannot doubt, will forgive me for taking this liberty. I even flatter myself you will approve of it. I am to set out for Scotland on Monday morning; so that if your Lordship should have any commands for me, as to this pious negotiation, you will be pleased to send them before that time. But

<sup>1</sup> From Hill, *Johnsonian Miscellanies*, ii. 459, where it was first printed. The answer is given in *Life*, iv. 336, where the attendant circumstances are explained.

<sup>2</sup> For Francesco Sastres see *Letters of Johnson*, *passim*.

Sir Joshua Reynolds, with whom I have consulted, will be here, and will gladly give all attention to it.

I am, with very great respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient  
and most humble servant,

James Boswell.

## 225. To the Right Reverend Thomas Percy<sup>1</sup>

My dear Lord,

Carlisle, 8 July 1784.

Having met with Mr. Buckby, a clergyman of your Lordship's diocese, as a fellow traveller, I take the opportunity of his going to Ireland to write a few lines, begging to know if your Lordship received in spring last a letter from me, with a political pamphlet?

I left Dr. Johnson wonderfully recovered, but by no means well. I hope he will go to Italy before winter. I have at length resolved, with his approbation, to try my fortune at the English Bar, a scheme of which your Lordship talked to me in an animating strain, when I was hospitably entertained by you at this place.

May I hope to hear from your Lordship at Edinburgh? I beg to have my best compliments presented to Mrs. Percy and the young ladies; and I ever am, my dear Lord, your Lordship's faithful humble servant,

James Boswell.

## 226. To <George-Monck> Berkeley<sup>2</sup>

Portman Square, Monday morning, <? 1785>.

Mr. Boswell presents his compliments to Mr. Berkeley; is much obliged to him for his kind offer; will by no means allow

<sup>1</sup> From Nichols, *Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century*, vii. 303

<sup>2</sup> From the original in the Adam Collection. The letter is addressed, '— Berkeley, Esq. Harcourt Buildings, Inner Temple' The recipient

was undoubtedly George-Monck Berkeley (1763-93), poet and dramatist, member of the Inner Temple, and grandson of Bishop Berkeley. He was the author of *Literary Relics* (1789), containing unpublished letters of famous eighteenth-century authors.

Mr.

Mr. Berkeley to take the trouble of calling on him ; but after some interesting business, which will engage him all this day and perhaps tomorrow, will do himself the honour to wait on Mr. Berkeley.

## 227. To the Reverend Dr. William Adams<sup>1</sup>

Reverend Sir,

Edinburgh, 21 January 1785.

I most sincerely condole with you on the death of our valuable friend, Dr. Johnson.

As I am engaged in writing his life, it will be very obliging if you will favour me with communications concerning him, in addition to those with which you have already favoured me. The more minute your narrative is, the better. And if you will send me any letters from him of which you are possessed, your kindness shall be thankfully acknowledged. Please put your packets under cover to Sir Charles Preston, Baronet, M.P., London, who will forward them to me

I offer my best compliments to Mrs. and Miss Adams ; and I ever am, with most sincere regard,

Dear Sir,

Your much obliged

humble servant,

James Boswell.

## 228. To the Right Reverend Thomas Percy<sup>2</sup>

My dear Lord,

Auchinleck, 20 March 1785.

Instead of apologising for not thanking your Lordship sooner, for your last kind letter, which was valued by me as it

Berkeley was an intense admirer of Johnson, and it is probable that his 'offer' to Boswell had to do with the forthcoming *Life*. There is, however, no mention of Berkeley in that work.

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the Adam Collection. The recipient was the Reverend William Adams, D.D., who became Master of Pembroke in 1777. Boswell and Johnson had twice visited him at Oxford, first in

1776, and again in the June before Johnson's death. Johnson had also visited him in the preceding February. In *Life*, iv. 376, will be found a selection from a letter of Dr. Adams, evidently written in reply to the one here printed.

<sup>2</sup> From Nichols, *Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century*, vii. 303.



ought to be, I shall follow the maxim *ad eventum festina*,<sup>1</sup> and proceed directly to a subject which affects us mutually—the death of our illustrious friend, Dr. Johnson. I certainly need not enlarge on the shock it gave my mind. I do not expect to recover from it. I mean, I do not expect that I can ever in this world have so mighty a loss supplied. I gaze after him with an eager eye; and I hope again to be with him.

It is a great consolation to me now, that I was so assiduous in collecting the wisdom and wit of that wonderful man. It is long since I resolved to write his life—I may say, his life and conversation. He was well informed of my intention, and communicated to me a thousand particulars from his earliest years upwards to that dignified intellectual state in which we have beheld him with awe and admiration.

I am first to publish the *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, in company with him, which will exhibit a specimen of that wonderful conversation, in which wisdom and wit were equally conspicuous. My talent for recording conversation is handsomely acknowledged by your Lordship upon the blank leaf of Selden's *Table Talk*, with which you was so good as <to> present me. The *Life* will be a large work, enriched with letters and other original pieces of Dr. Johnson's composition; and, as I wish to have the most ample collection I can make, it will be some time before it is ready for publication.

I am indebted to your Lordship for a copy of 'Pope's Note' concerning him,<sup>2</sup> and for a list of some of his works which was written down in his presence uncontradicted;<sup>3</sup> but he corrected it for me when I pressed him. If your Lordship will favour me with any thing else of or concerning him I shall be much obliged to you. You must certainly recollect a number of anecdotes. Be pleased to write them down, as you so well can do, and send them to me.

I am now, as your Lordship once observed to me, your *neighbour*. For, while here, at the romantick seat of my ancestors, I am at no great distance from Ireland. I hope we shall yet visit as neighbours. At present, however, I am on the

<sup>1</sup> Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 148, 'ad eventum festinat', said of Homer.

<sup>2</sup> See *Life*, i. 142.

<sup>3</sup> See *Life*, iii. 321; cf. i. 112.

wing for London, where letters addressed to me at General Paoli's, Upper Seymour Street, Portman Square, will find me. I beg to have my best compliments presented to Mrs. Percy and the young ladies, and I have the honour to remain your Lordship's faithful humble servant,

James Boswell.

## 229. To John Pinkerton<sup>\*</sup>

Monday, 23 May <1785>.

Mr. Boswell presents his compliments to Mr. Pinkerton. Will be much obliged to him for a copy of the *Complaint againis the lang Law Sutes* from the Pepysian Library, as it will be of immediate service to Mr. Boswell in defending the constitution of the ancient Court of Session. May Mr. Boswell, when quoting it, mention Mr. Pinkerton's expected publication?

## 230. To Sir Joshua Reynolds<sup>\*</sup>

My dear Sir,

London, 7 June 1785.

The debts which I contracted in my father's lifetime will not be cleared off by me for some years. I therefore think it

<sup>\*</sup> From the original in the Adam Collection. The year is added in another hand. The recipient was John Pinkerton (1758-1826), a Scottish antiquary, who, in the next year, published his *Ancient Scottish Poems never before in print*. Boswell refers to his own *Letter to the People of Scotland on the Alarming Attempt to infringe the Articles of the Union and introduce a most Pernicious Innovation, by diminishing the Number of the Lords of Session*. The letter is dated 'London, May, 1785,' but since it contains no mention of Pinkerton or the *Complaint*, it is probable that the recipient was unable to grant the request or did not receive the letter in time.

<sup>2</sup> From the original belonging to

Mr. Rupert Colomb. The letter is endorsed by Reynolds, 'I agree to the above conditions. London, Sep 10th, 1785. J. Reynolds.'

The picture which was painted as a result of this negotiation is the well-known half-length portrait of Boswell standing in front of a large curtain which, partially drawn, reveals a view of Auchinleck in the background. The picture, which must have been painted in the autumn of 1785, was engraved by John Jones in January 1786. It is now in the National Portrait Gallery. According to Graves and Cronin (*History of the Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, 1899), Boswell sat to Reynolds again in 1789.

unconscientious to indulge myself in any expensive article of elegant luxury. But in the mean time, you may die, or I may die; and I should regret very much that there should not be at Auchinleck, my portrait painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, with whom I have the felicity of living in social intimacy.

I have a proposal to make to you. I am for certain to be called to the English Bar next February. Will you now do my picture, and the price shall be paid out of the first fees which I receive as a barrister in Westminster Hall. Or if that fund should fail, it shall be paid at any rate five years hence by myself or my representatives.

If you are pleased to approve of this proposal, your signifying your concurrence underneath upon two duplicates, one of which shall be kept by each of us will be a sufficient voucher of the obligation.

I ever am with very sincere regards, my dear Sir,

Your faithful and

affectionate humble servant,

James Boswell.

### 231. To Joseph Cooper Walker<sup>1</sup>

Sir,

London, 1 July 1785.

I am very much obliged to you for your polite attention in offering to collect for me among the literati of Dublin such private letters of Dr. Johnson as have been preserved. All that you can send me will be very acceptable, for it is my design in writing the life of that great and good man, to put, as it were, into a mausoleum all of his precious remains that I can gather.<sup>2</sup> Be pleased, Sir, to transmit your packets for me to the care of Mr. Dilly, Bookseller, London.

I should ill deserve the liberal aid you are to afford me, did I not endeavour to procure for you in return what communi-

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the Adam Collection. The recipient was Joseph Cooper Walker (1761-1810) of Dublin, an Irish antiquary, whose *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards* appeared in the next year. For his

assistance to Boswell, see *Life*, i. 321; iii. 111.

<sup>2</sup> In the manuscript *that I can gather* was originally *which have not perished*.

cations I can get for your historical memoirs of the bards and musick of Ireland. I myself am very ill informed upon that subject. But when I get back to Scotland, which will be some time in autumn next, my exertions shall not be wanting.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

James Boswell.

## 232. To Sir John Dick, Baronet<sup>1</sup>

Portman Square, No. 1, London, 2 September 1785.

Dear Sir,

Though you are well acquaint(ed) with '*the modes of the court*' you have not that which Gay so well satyrises in the *Beggar's Opera*, '*But shift you for money from friend to friend.*'<sup>2</sup>

Your most genteel and kind offer to accomodate me, which you made about three months ago, I then declined, as supposing I should have no occasion for it. But having been detained here much longer than I reckoned I should be, I shall now be obliged to you for a draft for £50 or £60, for which my note shall be transmitted to you.

I set out for Scotland on Monday the 12; but shall be some time of getting home, as I have promised to be at Sir George Osborne's<sup>3</sup> in Bedfordshire, Sir Thomas Wentworth<sup>4</sup> Black(et's in) Yorkshire, (and Coun)sellor Lee's<sup>5</sup> in the Bishoprick(.) (I shal)l return to London in winter, as (I brin)g my family hither in May; fo(r here I) must try my fortune, and here I shall depend much upon your friendship, and not a little upon your good advice.

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the Adam Collection.

<sup>2</sup> Act 3, scene 4.

<sup>3</sup> Sir George Osborn (1742-1818); his Parliamentary career had ended in the previous year

<sup>4</sup> 'My shrewd and hearty friend Sir Thomas (Wentworth) Blacket, Lady Macdonald's uncle.' *Tour to the Hebrides*, p. 148, note 1. Lady

Macdonald was Elizabeth Bosville

<sup>5</sup> John Lee, K.C. (1733-93). Johnson considered 'Jack' Lee 'an impudent dog', but the 'best heard' of any Counsel at the bar of the House of Commons. *Life*, III. 224. Boswell, though agreeing with him in almost nothing, loved him 'exceedingly'. *Letter to the People of Scotland*, (1785) p. 75.

Pray

Pray let me know how you have been, and if there is a prospect of your being here before I go.

The worthy General<sup>1</sup> and Mr. Gentile offer you their best compliments and I have the honour to be, with great regard,

My dear Sir John,

Your faithful and

affectionate humble servant

James Boswell.

### 233. To Joseph Cooper Walker<sup>2</sup>

Sir,

London, 20 December 1785

I am happy to find that you are so pleased with my *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*.

After all the inquiry which I have made concerning ancient Scottish musick, I have only obtained references to several publications on that subject, which I now communicate.

1 Dissertation annexed to Arnot's *History of Edinburgh* (written by Mr Tytler, the vindicator of Mary Queen of Scots).

2 Article, 'Musick' in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, said to be written by Dr. Blacklock.

3. *Collection of Highland Musick* (1784), with a long Preface.

See also Dr. Beattie's *Essay on Poetry and Musick*, and Dr. Gregory's chapter on that subject, in his *Comparative View*.

I am sorry I have not been able to do more for you.

I am, Sir,

Your most obliged and most obedient humble servant,

James Boswell.

P.S. A second edition of my *Journal* will appear in a day or two. It is considerably improved by a correction of many typographical errors and other inaccuracies, by a table of contents, several additional notes, and an appendix. If, therefore, the Irish booksellers should have occasion to reprint my book, it will be obliging if you will suggest that the reprint should be made from my second and more perfect edition.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Paoli.

the imprint 1785, does not, however,

<sup>2</sup> From the original in the possession of A. Edward Newton, Esq.

incorporate these improvements. It is probable that the book was already

<sup>3</sup> The Dublin edition, which bears in print.

Reverend

234. To the Reverend Dr. William Adams<sup>1</sup>

Reverend Sir,

London, 22 December 1785.

Your obliging approbation of my *Tour* with our great friend has given me a very high satisfaction; for, besides the value of praise *a laudato viro*,<sup>2</sup> you are peculiarly *competent* (as we say in the law) to judge of what I have done to preserve Dr. Johnson really 'as he was'.

You have favoured me with several interesting anecdotes for his *Life*. May I beg that in addition to that goodness, you may be pleased to let me have what letters he wrote to you, however short, that my collection may be enriched with them. You mentioned to me that they are chiefly recommendations of visitors to your University. But they will be of value. So pray send them to me, to the care of Mr. Dilly, Bookseller, London.

I am going down to Scotland to pass the Christmas holidays with my wife and children, and I hope to be here again early in February, that I may go on with my large Work, for which I solicit more communications from you

I shall at all times be happy in an opportunity of enjoying your conversation. I beg to have my best compliments presented to Miss Adams, and I remain with most sincere respect,

My dear Sir,

Your much obliged and

faithful humble servant,

James Boswell.

235. To —<sup>3</sup>

Sir,

Temple, Wednesday, <January, 1786>.

I called this morning but was not so fortunate as to find you at home. You were so good as to say, when I pointed out

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the Adam Collection. The letter to which this is an answer is printed by Boswell. *Life*, i. 8.

<sup>2</sup> A phrase from Naeivius quoted by Cicero (*Tusc. Disp.*, iv. 31. 67, and elsewhere).

<sup>3</sup> From the original in the Adam

Collection. The date is deduced from the reference to Boswell's call to the English Bar in the Hilary term of 1786. The recipient may, perhaps, have been Sir John Dick or (less probably) John Wilkes. Boswell is known to have borrowed money from both.

to you that your note was due two months later than the appointed time, that if I found any difficulty in getting it discounted you would alter it. I should be much indebted to you if you would do so now as now it would be negociable and I have at present rather a demand upon me as I am this term to be called to the Bar. I will call on you tomorrow about twelve, but, should you not happen to be at home at that time, I will be obliged to you if you will mention when I can see you.

Your most obt. humble servt.

James Boswell.

### 236. To Euphemia Boswell<sup>1</sup>

My dear Phemie,

London, 4 March 1786.

I received your kind letter <for> which I thank you I have been remarkably well since I left you, and hope we shall all meet in good health in this great city the next month or the one after. I shall endeavour to have everything in as good order as I can before you come. I flatter myself you will be much improved here. But in the meantime I trust you are attentive to your mamma, and that you apply to the different parts of your education.

I remain

Your affectionate father,

James Boswell.

### 237. To John Wilkes<sup>2</sup>

My dear Sir,

Mr. Dilly's, Thursday, 9 March <1786>.

Mr. Malone, Mr. Courtenay,<sup>3</sup> and I, your old classical travelling companion, will be much disappointed if you do not meet us today at Mr. Dilly's hospitable board, where you will

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the Adam Collection. The recipient was the biographer's second daughter, Euphemia (1774–ca.1833). This is the only letter of Boswell's to one of his children that has found its way into print.

<sup>2</sup> From the original in the British Museum.

<sup>3</sup> John Courtenay (1741–1816), M.P. He was a member of the Literary Club and author of *A Poetical Review of the Literary and Moral Character of Dr. Johnson* (1786).

find wit and wine and *gayeté de coeur*. Remember the jovial song in which we read,

‘Talk no more of Whig and Tory’,

and

‘Let state affairs and worldly cares  
Be thought of at more leisure.’

Your excuse, therefore, of being engaged to attend your duty in Parliament will not be allowed, and were the call ever so strong, you would be in time enough, after some pleasant hours with us here.

Your life is already too rich in incident to require another outlawry to vary and animate your memoirs. But if you do not come, depend upon it you shall be outlawed by us as a competent tribunal; and as Lord Mansfield<sup>1</sup> is now old, and I by my admission to the English bar,<sup>2</sup> which you so agreeably celebrated, am now *in posse* to succeed him, I give you fair warning that I differ so much from his Lordship that your outlawry shall not be reversed. My *fiat justitia* shall not be a *Brutum fulmen*.<sup>3</sup> Let me address you in the words in which you ingeniously fancied Lord Bute to address a great personage at Rome, *Nil mihi rescribas attamen ipse veni*.<sup>4</sup>

## 238. To John Spottiswoode<sup>5</sup>

Dear Sir,

York, 16 March 1786.

Enclosed is a letter to Mr. Chalmer (if there is an s at the end of his name please add it) to beg that he may join with you

<sup>1</sup> It was Lord Mansfield, as Chief Justice of England, who, after a long and complicated series of proceedings, reversed the charge of outlawry against Wilkes. He is said to have used, on that occasion, the words, *Fiat justitia, ruat cælum*. All this was long after Wilkes had returned from his period of exile on the Continent, but constituted a formal withdrawal of the charges which had been made against him, and for which

he had been condemned as an outlaw.

<sup>2</sup> January 1786.

<sup>3</sup> *Brutum fulmen*, ‘a blind stroke’, with pun on the name ‘Brutus’ as applied by Boswell to Wilkes.

<sup>4</sup> Ovid, *Heroides*, 1. 2; now generally emended to read, ‘Tu tamen ipse veni’.

<sup>5</sup> From the original in the Adam Collection. For the recipient see *Life*, III. 326.



in a motion to put off the cause, Cuninghame against Cuninghame &c., till after Easter. I hope he will oblige me in this; and I shall thank you for letting me know when it is settled.

My address is Barrister at law, York. I shall not get back to London till the middle of April, or perhaps a little later, as I intend to go by Oxford <sup>1</sup> from Lancaster.

We have a great snow here. I remain with sincere regard,

Dear Sir,

Your faithful humble servant,

James Boswell.

### 239. To John Spottiswoode<sup>1</sup>

Dear Sir,

York, 25 March 1786.

I am sorry the application for delay in Cuninghame agst. Cuninghame was made before my letter reached you. Pray try again, and mention that the Lancaster assizes will not be over till the 11 or 12. If better cannot be, I shall leave them and come to you either on the 10 or 11 on which last day let the consultation be fixed. I wish by all means to have the Lord Advocate <sup>2</sup> with me. I spoke to him of it before I left town. His Lordship was very jealous in the cause in my absence, when it was decided in Scotland. Pray let me hear the result of a second application. There surely is no occasion for having our cause on before Easter, and I suppose there is another ready to take its place.

I shall revise the proof of the case carefully, and return it to you.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

James Boswell.

Sir Thomas Davenport <sup>4</sup> died this morning.

<sup>1</sup> He visited Oxford in company with Malone. See letter of 10 May, below.

<sup>2</sup> From a copy. The original is in the possession of John Gribbel, Esq.

<sup>3</sup> Henry Erskine (1746-1817), who

had been advanced to the office of Lord Advocate of Scotland in the preceding December.

<sup>4</sup> Serjeant-at-law. Hewasknighted in June 1783.

Dear

## 240. To —

Dear Sir,

10 May 1786.

Mr. Malone and I went to Oxford lately; and I was told you were gone to London. Since my return I have received your obliging letter.

I am at present in a wavering state. I have our worthy friend Hoole's<sup>2</sup> house; but I still remain at General Paoli's in Portman Square. I long to meet you, and shall tell you what I know about our common ancestor *Robert the Bruce*.<sup>3</sup>

Yours very sincerely,

James Boswell.

241. To the Right Reverend Thomas Percy<sup>4</sup>

My dear Lord,

London, 12 July 1786.

My friend Malone undertook to convey to your Lordship a copy of my *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, which I hope you have received.

Your Lordship's last letter to me, which had been unaccountably mislaid in some corner of my house at Edinburgh, has at last been found. I am very sorry that it is now too late to obey your Lordship's commands to procure you a copy of our Scottish regulations, of which I understand from the Bishop of Killaloe you have formed, for your Royal Society, the best in the world. But I beg leave to renew my solicitation, and to remind your Lordship of your obliging promise to let me have any materials in your possession that can illustrate the *Life of Dr. Johnson*, which I am now preparing for the press. I beg that your Lordship may be kind enough to favour me with them as soon as you can, as I now have occasion for all that I can get. Be pleased to direct for me at Mr. Dilly's, Bookseller,

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the Adam Collection. In his *Catalogue of the Adam Collection*, Mr. Adam considers the letter to have been addressed to William Mickle.

<sup>2</sup> John Hoole (1727-1803), the translator of Ariosto and Tasso.

<sup>3</sup> 'My great grandfather . . . was

Alexander, Earl of Kincardine. . . . From him the blood of Bruce flows in my veins.' *Tour to the Hebrides*, p. 25, note 2.

<sup>4</sup> From Nichols, *Illustrations*, vii. 304, where Percy's reply, dated 5 March 1787, is also printed.

London Though the magnitude and lustre of his character make Dr. Johnson an object of the public attention longer than almost any person whom we have known, yet there is some danger that if the publication of his life be delayed too long, curiosity may be fainter. I am, therefore, anxious to bring forth my quarto Pray, then, send me your kind communications without delay.

I am much pleased with the edition of the *Tatler*, with notes; but I should have been better pleased had the notes been all *by one hand*; your Lordship will understand me. I long to have the *Spectator*, my early favourite, illustrated in the same manner.<sup>1</sup>

What a dreary thing (I cannot help feeling it) is it to have one's friends removed to a distant country! When I recollect the many pleasing hours which I have passed with Dr. Percy in London, and the few at Alnwick, and the few at Edinburgh, and a good many at Carlisle, how much do I wish that he were well established in England! I am resolved, however, some time or other, to see Ireland all over;<sup>2</sup> and with what glee shall we talk over old stories at Dromore!

I am now at the English Bar, of which I long wished to make a fair trial. How long I shall continue will depend upon circumstances.

I beg to have my best compliments presented to Mrs. Percy and the young ladies, and I have the honour to be, my dear Lord, your faithful humble servant,

James Boswell.

## 242. To the Reverend William Temple

My dear Temple,

London, 5 January 1787.<sup>3</sup>

By what channel I know not, farther than the penny post, I received this morning before I got out of bed your last very

<sup>1</sup> *The Tatler*, a new edition, with notes (by J. Nichols and others, edited by J. Nichols). Six volumes, London, 1786. A note signed 'T.D.', i.e., 'Thomas Dromore', reads, 'The

Bishop of Dromore had no hand in this edition.'

<sup>2</sup> He never visited Ireland again

<sup>3</sup> Manuscript 1786, altered, in another hand, to 1787

affecting

affecting letter.<sup>1</sup> Business called me into the City; and I returned with intention to write to you. But Sir Joshua Reynolds, I find, has invited me to dine at his house at four with the Laureat,<sup>2</sup> who is just come to town, and I cannot resist; so I can only assure you of my sincerest sympathy, and prayers, *ineffectual* as I may fear they are. I have regretted that I was not acquainted with my amiable godson. Perhaps I should *now* be thankful. Yet, when my mind is firm as it is at present, I *feel* a solid confidence in the divine wisdom and goodness with an humble 'waiting for the great teacher, Death'.<sup>3</sup>

You shall hear from me soon again, and I beg you may write frequently under cover of Mr. Courtenay. Be comforted, my old and most intimate friend, with pious hope, and be assured of the unceasing and warm regard of your truly affectionate

James Boswell.

### 243. To the Reverend Mr. Astle<sup>4</sup>

Reverend Sir,

London, 14 February 1787.

I should have sooner acknowledged the list of books by Dr. Johnson, but thought it might be giving you needless trouble. I am much obliged to you for it. I *guess* at the way in which the *Fragments* are known to be authentick; but I shall not express it in my compilation. I shall apply to Mr. Astle of the Treasury, to whom I am a little known, and I beg you may accept of my hearty thanks for your favours.

I am,

Reverend Sir,

Your most obedient,

humble servant,

James Boswell.

<sup>1</sup> The letter announced the death of Temple's eldest son, William Johnson, aged eighteen. Cf. p. 167. Boswell's correspondence with Temple is resumed after a long interval.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Warton (1728-90).

<sup>3</sup> Pope, *Essay on Man*, l. 92, a

favourite quotation with Boswell.

<sup>4</sup> From a copy; the original is in the possession of James Tregaskis, Esq. The letter is addressed to the Reverend Mr. Astle, Ashbourn, Derbyshire. The letter is sufficiently explained by *Life*, iv. 311.

Dear

244. To Francis Barber<sup>1</sup>

Dear Sir,

London, 29 June 1787.

Sir John Hawkins having done gross injustice to the character of the great and good Dr. Johnson, and having written so injuriously of you<sup>2</sup> and Mrs. Barber,<sup>3</sup> as to deserve severe animadversion, and perhaps to be brought before the spiritual court, I cannot doubt of your inclination to afford me all the helps you can to state the truth fairly, in the work which I am now preparing for the press.

I therefore beg that you will without delay write three copies of the letter No. 1 which I enclose, directing one to Sir Joshua Reynolds, one to Dr. Scott, and one to Sir John Hawkins, putting to each the *date* of which you write, and enclose them to me, together with a letter to me, in the words of No. 2. I have mentioned the business to Sir Joshua and Dr. Scott.<sup>4</sup> When I have received the said letters distinctly written out by you, I shall proceed in an effectual manner.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the Johnson Museum in Lichfield.

The recipient was Francis Barber, who had been Johnson's manservant. Hawkins, in his *Life of Johnson* (published as vol. 1 of the booksellers' edition of the *Works of Johnson* in 1787) gives the following account of him (p. 326) 'Soon after the decease of Mrs. Johnson, the father of Dr. Bathurst arrived in England from Jamaica, and brought with him a negro-servant, a native of that island, whom he caused to be baptized and named Francis Barber, and sent for instruction to Burton upon Tees in Yorkshire: upon the decease of Captain Bathurst, for so he was called, Francis went to live with his son, who willingly parted with him to Johnson.'

<sup>2</sup> Sir John's dislike of Frank was caused by the fact that Johnson had left him a legacy of £70 a year, and

had made him residuary legatee, the property being held in trust for him by the executors. Sir John asserted that Johnson had told him that Frank was a 'loose fellow', and he himself gave evidence to show that he was of a grasping nature. At the very end of his book he sneeringly remarks upon 'ostentatious bounty' and 'favour to negroes' (see pp. 328, 586, and 602).

<sup>3</sup> 'In his search of a wife, he picked up one of those creatures with whom, in the disposal of themselves, no contrariety of colour is an obstacle.' *Ib.*, p. 586. In the next sentence Mrs. Barber's honour is deliberately aspersed.

<sup>4</sup> These gentlemen, with Sir John Hawkins, were Johnson's executors.

<sup>5</sup> Frank replied, gratefully, 9 July 1787, (letter in the possession of Charles McCamie Esq.) Cf p. 341, below.

Please

Please to enclose your packet to me under cover of

The Honourable

William Ward, M.P.

London.

You may at the same time let me have a private letter informing me how you are, and mentioning any thing that occurs to yourself. Be assured that I am ever sincerely concerned for your welfare.

I send my compliments to Mrs. Barber and am, with much regard,

Dear Sir,

Your steady friend,

James Boswell.

245. <To the Reverend James Beattie<sup>1</sup>

October 1787.>

246. To the Reverend John Hussey<sup>2</sup>

Dear Sir,

London, 15 October 1787.

Your Miscellany for the communication of which I thank you was left at my house carefully sealed up, when I went to Scotland, supposing that you were to call for it. I have found it on my return, as also your obliging favour of 9th September. I return you Dr. Johnson's letter of which I have taken a copy, and your Miscellany shall be left at Mr. Ruston's. I am, dear Sir,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In M. Forbes, *Beattie and his Friends* (p 233) occurs the following passage, 'Mr. Boswell, in October, begs Beattie to let him have any letters he had received from Johnson, or any anecdotes or fragments of his conversation he may remember to assist him in the "Doctor's Life", which he is preparing for the press.'

<sup>2</sup> From a copy; the original is in the possession of D Nichol Smith,

Esq. The recipient was the Reverend John Hussey, for whom see *Life*, iii. 369 Hill quoted many of his comments, which were written in his interleaved copy of the *Life*, in *Johnsonian Miscellanies*, *passim*. I suppose the *Miscellany* to have been a series of remarks and papers about Johnson.

<sup>3</sup> The signature has been cut away.

My

247. To the Right Reverend Thomas Percy<sup>1</sup>

London, Great Queen Street,  
Lincoln's Inn Fields,

My dear Lord, 9 February 1788.

Procrastination, we all know, increases in a proportionate ratio the difficulty of doing that which might have once been done very easily. I am really uneasy to think how long it is since I was favoured with your Lordship's communications concerning Dr. Johnson, which, though few, are valuable, and will contribute to increase my store. I am ashamed that I have yet seven years to write of his life. I do it chronologically, giving year by year his publications, if there were any; his letters, his conversations, and every thing else that I can collect. It appears to me that mine is the best plan of biography that can be conceived; for my readers will as near as may be accompany Johnson in his progress, and, as it were, see each scene as it happened. I am of opinion that my delay will be for the advantage of the work, though perhaps not for the advantage of the author, both because his fame may suffer from too great expectation, and the sale may be worse from the subject being comparatively old. But I mean to do my duty as well as I can. Mrs. (Thrale) Piozzi's collection of his letters will be out soon,<sup>2</sup> and will be a rich addition to the Johnsonian memorabilia. I saw a sheet at the printing-house yesterday, and observed Letter CCCXXX, so that we may expect much entertainment. It is wonderful what avidity there still is for every thing relative to Johnson. I dined at Mr. Malone's on Wednesday with Mr. W. G. Hamilton,<sup>3</sup> Mr. Flood,<sup>4</sup> Mr. Wyndham, Mr. Courtenay, &c.; and Mr. Hamilton observed

<sup>1</sup> From Nichols, *Illustrations*, vii. 308, where Percy's reply, 'much altered', is also printed.

<sup>2</sup> They appeared in March under the title, *Letters to and from the late Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*, in two volumes.

<sup>3</sup> William Gerard Hamilton (1729-96), M.P. for Wilton, known as

'Single-speech Hamilton'. See Miss Burney's *Diary* (ed. Dobson, 1914), i. 308. Hamilton is the 'nervous mortal' mentioned in the letter of 25 February 1791, p. 424.

<sup>4</sup> Henry Flood (1732-91), M.P., whom Boswell called an orator and a distinguished scholar. See letter of 8 February 1790, p. 389.

very

very well, what a proof it was of Johnson's merit, that we had been talking of him almost all the afternoon. But your Lordship needs no refreshment upon that subject

I have two or three letters from him to Francis Barber, while that faithful negro was at school at Easton Mauduit.<sup>1</sup> Can your Lordship give me any particulars of Johnson's conduct in that benevolent business?

Your Lordship would, I am sure, be pleased to see that I was lately elected Recorder of Carlisle. Lord Lonsdale's recommending me to that office was an honourable proof of his Lordship's regard for me, and I may hope that this may lead to future promotion. I have indeed no claim upon his Lordship; but I shall endeavour to deserve his countenance.<sup>2</sup>

Malone flatters himself that his Shakespeare will be published in June. I should rather think that we shall not have it till winter.<sup>3</sup> Come when it may, it will be a very admirable book.

Our club goes on as it has done for some time past. Shall we not have the pleasure of seeing your Lordship among us this year? However much I may rejoice at your Lordship's elevation, I cannot but feel a very sincere regret at your absence. I recollect with fondness the happy mornings I have passed in that capital study in Northumberland House, and elsewhere. Does not your Lordship sometimes wish to be in old England again?

I offer my best compliments to Mrs. Percy and to the young ladies. How do they like Ireland? I ever am, my dear Lord, with great regard, your Lordship's very faithful humble servant,

James Boswell.

<sup>1</sup> Percy had been rector of Easton Maudit, in Northamptonshire, a quarter of a century before. Frank, as Percy states in his reply, had never been at school there. For Barber see A. Lyell Reade, *Francis Barber, the Doctor's Negro Servant* (*Johnsonian Gleanings*, Part II, privately printed, London, 1912).

<sup>2</sup> Sir James Lowther (1736-1802), first Earl of Lonsdale, a professional and unscrupulous politician, some-

times known as 'the bad earl'. Boswell's relations with him form a story of boot-licking and place-hunting at once pathetic and disgusting. Lonsdale controlled nine seats in the House of Commons, from which fact his representatives had long been known as 'Sir James's Ninepins'.

<sup>3</sup> It did not appear until November 1790.



## 248. To the Reverend William Temple

My dear Temple, London, Sunday, 24 February 1788.

I was yesterday enabled by your friendship to keep my credit entire, in a place where any suspicion against it is very fatal. David will send you my note, which is all the security that is necessary in such a transaction. You need be under no sort of apprehension as to a *sudden* demand of the £630; for though the will *should* be set aside (which I do not fear) it must be by a tedious suit in Chancery, and you may depend upon your advance to me being repaid long before you could have occasion for the money in that event.

As to your niece, it is very natural for you to imagine that what you affectionately and laudably wish is practicable, nay easy. But in a calm conversation with Miss Palmer,<sup>1</sup> with whom I went to breakfast on purpose to talk with her on the subject, I found that to get your niece into the situation of a companion and governess is precisely the most difficult thing that can be figured. Sir Joshua who was by, and has allways good sense and observation, lent in a word, and said that a *companion* must be a person whom one chuses, from one's own knowledge.

Monday, 25 February.<sup>2</sup>

Nobody says to another, 'Get me a companion'. Then said Miss Palmer, 'So many *accomplishments* are required in a *Governess* that probably this young woman would not answer; and were she to take the mode which is frequently tried of getting into a boarding school, as what is called a *half-boarder*, to become qualified as a *teacher*, she probably might not find an eligible situation, because except in some of the very great families, a governess is treated little better than a common servant.'—You see, then, my friend, how a scheme, which you and I, in the warmth of simplicity which I think will forever mark our characters, might think could be realised speedily,

<sup>1</sup> Sir Joshua's niece Mary, later Lady Thomond. Boswell often refers to her as 'Palmeria'. She was the daughter of Sir Joshua's sister Mary,

and now lived with him in London.  
<sup>2</sup> This date is inserted at the top of a new page. There is no break in the text.

is in fact almost hopeless. My wife told me that a lady of pretty good fortune here, who is her relation and mine, told her that she sent her daughter to a boarding-school, because she could not afford to keep a *second* table for a governess, and she could not *bear* to have governess sit at table with her husband and her.—In Scotland I know they are better treated, and perhaps in the country in England—However, it appears to me that what you wish for your niece can be attained only in the north, where her connections are and where her *accent* would not be an objection, as it certainly would be here—or—by your taking her for some time into your own family, and by degrees getting her recommended to some agreeable situation in the west, through your means.

As to your nephew, whom you wish to get into Christ's Hospital, honest David who, at the same time that he is accurate and strict as to his own rights and his own agreements, is truly active in serving his friends, has already brought me a list of the governours, so many of whom marked with asterisks have a right (about once in two years) to present a boy not a son of a freeman of London; and amongst these I find Alderman Clark,<sup>1</sup> who was a friend of Dr. Johnson's, to whom I shall apply, and our friend Mr. Wilkes, to whom both you and I may apply. But what I really think will be the most probable means of attaining to what, I find, is an object of much competition, is for you to get Mr. and Mrs. Gwatkin<sup>2</sup> to interest Sir Joshua Reynolds to ask it of Alderman Boydell,<sup>3</sup> the great printseller and patron of artists, who either himself, or by the means of some other governour, may get it done. As I have too often seen how applications are civilly received but without effect, Sir Joshua must be prevailed on to *urge* it—to *make a point* of it.

I have not yet had a message from Mr. Railton, though he took down my address, and promised that we should meet when he had looked over the letters and papers on Mr. Forster's affairs. If he and I differ as to the right to the £250 legacy,

<sup>1</sup> For Richard Clark (1739–1831), previously Theophila Palmer, Sir see *Life*, iv. 258. Joshua's niece, 'Offy'

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Richard Lovell Gwatkin, <sup>3</sup> John Boydell (1719–1804)

I really think that the opinion of an experienced counsel should be taken (but without letting it be known), and if it be for your sister, let her stand a suit. If not let her trust to the generosity of the creditors

So much for business Does it not strike you how frequent our letters are, when *that* is in the case, compared with those periods when we have only friendly reciprocation and literary correspondence—a proof how Man is intended for *solid realities* more than the more pleasing and more amiable objects of the heart and the fancy. Yet surely intellectual business may be considered to be as real as any thing whatever.

Mason's *Life of Gray*<sup>1</sup> is excellent, because it is interspersed with letters which show us the *man*. His *Life of Whitehead*<sup>2</sup> is not a life at all; for there is neither a letter nor a saying from first to last. I am absolutely certain that *my* mode of biography, which gives not only a *history* of Johnson's *visible* progress through the world, and of his publications, but a *view* of his mind, in his letters and conversations is the most perfect that can be conceived, and will be *more* of a *Life* than any work that has ever yet appeared. I have been wretchedly dissipated, so that I have not written a line for a fortnight. But today I resume my pen, and shall labour vigorously. I am now in strong, steady spirits, which make me *confident* instead of being in *despondency* O! my friend, *what* can be the reason of such *depression* as we often suffer? I am very very uneasy on account of the state of my affairs. When you come we will consult. Now I *charge* you to be *determined* in coming *instantly* after Easter. Hurd does not . . .<sup>3</sup> his *Life of Warburton*, though it is written,

<sup>1</sup> In the *Life* (i. 29), Boswell says, 'I have resolved to adopt and enlarge upon the excellent plan of Mr. Mason in his *Memours of Gray*. Wherever narrative is necessary to explain, connect, and supply, I furnish it to the best of my abilities; but . . . I produce, wherever it is in my power, his own minutes, letters, or conversation.' Johnson did not share Boswell's admiration of Mason's

work (*Life*, iii. 31).

<sup>2</sup> This was prefixed to an edition of Whitehead's Poems, which appeared in this year Boswell says of it that 'there is literally no *Life*, but a mere dry narrative of facts' (*Life*, i. 31).

<sup>3</sup> The word is illegible; it may possibly be *issue*, but is certainly not *publish*, as in the edition of Boswell's letters to Temple printed in 1857

but a note to purchasers of the works to have it afterwards. I suppose he is affraid.<sup>1</sup>

Adieu, my dear friend,  
Ever yours affectly,

J. B.

My wife is, I thank God, much better. But is it not cruel to keep her in this pernicious air when she might be so much better at Auchinleck? But, *come, come, come*. Upon my honour if it be *possible* that you disappoint me another year, I shall believe you immersed in money-making. O! my friend, let us have some more comfortable hours in *our own old way*. On Saturday Sir Joshua, Miss Palmer, Mr. Malone, Mr. Langton, dined with us. Courtenay was taken ill and could not come, though engaged.

## 249. To Francis Barber<sup>2</sup>

Dear Sir,

London, 3 March 1788.

You have been so obliging, that I trouble you with a farther application, which is to copy, date, and subscribe the enclosed, and transmit it to me under cover of J. B. Garforth, Esq., M.P., London. You will be so good as at the same time to authorise me to receive from my brother what Sir John Hawkins delivers to him. I do not expect any thing but the diplomas.<sup>3</sup> It is,

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Hurd's edition of the works of Warburton appeared in this year; the life of the author, which was to form the 'general preface' to the whole edition was withheld from the press till 1794. In 1764 Hurd had become involved in controversy with the Reverend Thomas Leland regarding Warburton. It was the renewal of this controversy of which Hurd was 'afraid'—not without reason, since in 1789 Dr. Parr published his *Tracts by Warburton and a Warburtonian, not admitted into the collection of their respective Works*. The 'Warburtonian' is Hurd. In this controversy Boswell espoused the

cause of Dr. Parr. See *Life*, iv. 47, note 2, and below, p. 357.

<sup>2</sup> From a facsimile of the original in the catalogue of Messrs. Maggs Brothers, Spring, 1922.

<sup>3</sup> Doubtless the diplomas from Dublin University, and from Oxford University, which had conferred the doctor's degree on Johnson. Both diplomas were in the possession of Boswell when he wrote the *Life*, and it would appear that he acquired them from Frank. One of these seems at the time to have been in the possession of Barber (see next letter), and the other in the possession of Hawkins. To both Barber however,

however, as well to make the demand general. I do not employ Mr. Nichols's friendly interposition at present, as he is in distress on account of the death of his wife

Please to send your letter to Sir John *unsealed* that my brother may see his authority.

I shall be glad to hear particularly how you go on, and I send my compliments to Mrs. Barber.

I am, with sincere regard,

Dear Sir,

Your friend and humble servant,

James Boswell.

I flatter myself that my book will do justice to the character of your excellent master. It will not be published before September or October. Be so good as to present my best compliments to all at Lichfield who do me the honour of remembering me. It is very long since I had the honour of hearing from Miss Seward.

## 250. To Francis Barber<sup>1</sup>

Dear Sir,

London, 20 March 1788.

I thank you for your attention. Be so good as to send me the diploma which you have, by first sure opportunity, directed to me, No. 56 Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields.

And as I cannot specify exactly what papers Sir John Hawkins may yet have, you will please to write to me thus :

Sir,

I hereby authorise you to demand from Sir John Hawkins all books or papers of any sort which belonged to the late Dr. Samuel Johnson, that may be in his possession, and your receipt to him shall be sufficient on my account as residuary legatee.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant.

had a right as residuary legatee. Boswell was particularly anxious to secure the Oxford diploma, since Johnson had not permitted him to take a copy of it, 'fearing perhaps',

says Boswell, 'that I should blaze it abroad in his life-time'. *Life*, ii. 332, note.

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the Johnson Museum in Lichfield.

Let

Let this be copied over in your own hand, dated, and signed and addressed to me. I give you a great deal of trouble; but I am very desirous to collect all I can concerning your excellent master. I enclose you the funeral sermon which he composed for Mrs. Johnson.<sup>1</sup> You will read it with serious advantage, I doubt not. My compliments to Mrs Barber. I am, dear Sir,

Your sincere friend,

James Boswell.

Put your letters to me under cover of J. B. Garforth, Esq., M.P., London.

### 251. To Francis Barber<sup>a</sup>

Dear Sir,

London, 11 April 1788.

I have received both your letters, and shall demand from Sir John Hawkins what papers or books you have authorised me to receive.

As I am very sensible of your obliging disposition towards me, I am glad that I can accomodate you with the sum which you want, for which I enclose you a bank post bill.<sup>3</sup>

Please to deliver the enclosed to Miss Seward, and to present my best compliments to Mr. Green.<sup>4</sup>

Some of your old master's friends have thought that your opening a little shop for a few books and stationary wares in Lichfield might be a good thing for you.<sup>5</sup> You may consult, and consider of it. I am

Dear Sir,

Your sincere friend,

James Boswell.

Write to me under cover of J. B. Garforth, Esq., M.P., London.

<sup>1</sup> This sermon was never preached. See *Life*, i. 241. Johnson gave it to Dr. Taylor, who left it, with other sermons to be printed after his death. It appears in the second volume of the collection (1789).

<sup>2</sup> From the original in the Johnson Museum in Lichfield.

<sup>3</sup> The gift of the diploma and of other valuable information regarding Johnson seems to have encouraged

Frank to beg a loan of money.

<sup>4</sup> For Richard Green, the Lichfield antiquary, see letter of 22 October 1779, above.

<sup>5</sup> For Barber's subsequent life, see Reade, *Francis Barber*, pp. 74 ff. It appears that Boswell's suggestion was not adopted. Barber had retired to Lichfield on Johnson's recommendation.

Dear

252. To Anna Seward<sup>1</sup>

Dear Madam,

London, 11 April 1788.

There has now been a long and lamentable cessation of our epistolary intercourse, to solicit a renewal of which and to inquire after you and your reverend father, and my other friends at Lichfield is the purpose of this letter. The truth is that I have for some time been in such bad spirits on account of my wife's suffering under a long and alarming illness, that you must expect nothing from me in *our usual style*, to excite which, your *personal* presence and the '*purple light*'<sup>2</sup> would be required. But it will be exceedingly kind if you will 'give me of your precious stores'. I do not fail to trace your writings in the *Gentleman's Magazine* when your name appears, and sometimes (if I guess right) when it does not.

What a variety of publications have there been concerning Johnson. Never was there a man whose reputation remained so long in such luxuriant freshness as his does. How very envious of this do the 'little stars' of literature seem to be, though bright themselves in their due proportion. My *Life* of that illustrious man has been retarded by several avocations,

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the Johnson Museum in Lichfield. The recipient was the 'Swan of Lichfield', whom Boswell had met in 1776 (*Life*, II. 467), and with whom he had been in frequent communication. See *Letters of Anna Seward, written between the years 1784 and 1807*, Edinburgh, 1811, vols I-III, *passim*. Two of the letters are addressed to Boswell; in one of them she highly praises his *Tour to the Hebrides*, and in the other begs him to be impartial in writing the life of 'the Colossus'. Both antedate the present letter of Boswell's. Two visits from Boswell are also recorded, one in 1785 and one in October 1788.

Miss Seward detested Johnson, whom she habitually calls 'the despot', for his brutality, jealousy,

and superstition, and refers to his 'pharasaic meditations' and 'popish prayers for old Tetty's soul'. Boswell, however, found much to his purpose in her 'obliging communications', biased as they were. In the second edition of the *Life* (1793, I. 69, *note*), he ventured to criticize the accuracy of certain statements which she had made to him, and a violent controversy ensued between them. In the third edition of the *Life* (1795), Boswell expanded the criticism which he had made in the previous edition, and himself directed the reader to the *Gentleman's Magazine* (vols. 53 and 54) for the controversy into which he had been drawn.

<sup>2</sup> 'The bloom of young desire and purple light of love.' Gray, *Progress of Poesy*, line 41.

as well as by depression of mind. But I hope to have it ready for the press next month. I flatter myself it will exhibit him more completely than any person ancient or modern has yet been preserved, and whatever merit I may be allowed, the world will at least owe to my assiduity the possession of a rich intellectual treasure.

Do you, my charming friend, think of being in London this year? and are we to expect from you soon any such poem as that with which I was so *warmly delighted*?<sup>1</sup>

I beg to have my best compliments presented to Mr. Seward, and ever am

Dear Madam,

Your obliged and

faithful humble servant,

James Boswell.

Please to write to me under cover of J. B. Garforth, Esq., M.P., London, his house being nearer to me than my friend Mr. Courtenay's.

## 253. To the Reverend James Beattie<sup>2</sup>

1788.

. . . I am in great uneasiness at present on account of my wife, who is very ill with complaints which are alarming as threatening a consumption. I trust you are a believer in the efficacy of prayer, and I beg your pious intercession. Much, much requires explanation; let us 'wait the great teacher, Death.'

## 254. To Edmond Malone<sup>3</sup>

My dear Malone,

York, 12 July 1788.

Your long letter came safely to me before I left Auchinleck, on the 1st of this month, upon my own horse, to join the Northern

<sup>1</sup> Probably the *Ode on General Elliott's Return from Gibraltar*, which she had printed in the previous year.

<sup>2</sup> From M. Forbes, *Beattie and his Friends*, p. 242; the author prefixes the statement, 'Mr Boswell

thanks Beattie for some contributions to his *Life of Johnson*.'

<sup>3</sup> This and the succeeding letters to Malone, with one or two exceptions (duly noted later), are from the originals in the Adam Collection.



Circuit here, which I have done. I was not careless as to giving you my address. It was formerly by Cumnock and Dumfries. But a post being now established at Machline, the next village to me, I left a note of direction for you, *Auchinleck, Machline, by Edinburgh*. However, my daughter's direction, 'by *Kilmarnock*', which is eight miles farther off, did very well.

It was very obliging in you to give me so full an account of Sheridan's celebrated summing up,<sup>1</sup> which has undoubtedly been a very brilliant exhibition of talents; and I see the strong impression which it made upon you from the way in which you express yourself. But now that the fervour is somewhat abated, I hope you can bear to be told that I am still hopeful that, for the honour of Britain and that of undoubtedly a great and meritorious conductor of affairs, which, however I may as a humane moralist disapprove, are sanctioned by this country, Warren Hastings shall, upon the whole, be found not guilty. It is fair to tell you that I dined yesterday with the Archbishop of York,<sup>2</sup> and that the wines (in particular, the Burgundy) were excellent, and given with Archiepiscopal hospitality.

You fully excused yourself for your long silence in the vacancy, of which my 'keen eye' was beginning to see unpleasing possibilities. You must have indeed been a very busy man, and

Extracts from them were first printed in Croker's edition of Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, x. 209 ff., but many passages were excised. The present letter does not appear at all. Later the same extracts were edited by G. B. Hill (*Johnsonian Miscellanies*, II. 21 ff.).

For the recipient, Edmond Malone (1741-1812), see Sir James Prior's biography. Malone's intimacy with Boswell dates from 1785, when the latter dedicated to him the *Tour to the Hebrides*. The story of their first meeting in 1785, as told by James Boswell the younger (*Gentleman's Magazine*, 1813, p. 518) and repeated by Prior, ought, it would seem, to have been rejected long since, inas-

much as Malone had been a member of the Literary Club since 1782, and as Boswell speaks of a dinner of the Club (22 June 1784) at which both he and Malone were present. The intimacy of the two and the degree of assistance rendered to Boswell by Malone are recorded in the letters that follow.

<sup>1</sup> Sheridan's summary of the charges against Warren Hastings began on Tuesday, 3 June, and was continued on the Friday and on the Tuesday and Friday succeeding.

<sup>2</sup> William Markham (1719-1807), whom Boswell mentions in connexion with the Hastings affair because of his ardent support of that gentleman's cause.

I rejoice

I rejoice that you was so successful, and that our estimable young friend Jephson enjoyed what he deserved. Miss Catharine Malone shewed a spirit truly Milesian in repeatedly encountering the perilous struggles at the door of the Hall.<sup>1</sup> As nobody could be admitted without tickets, it was surely very ill-judged in those who had them to assemble so early. But a good place upon such an occasion is something, though, I think, it was bought too dear.

I am glad that you have had, and are to have, so much agreeable time with your ladies. You know what a circuit is, by supposing something rather better than what you have seen; and you may guess how I contrast my situation with yours. I am, however, animated with the consciousness of acting with a very manly spirit, and though a dreary remonstrance from my Spanish brother, that I am lessening myself when there is not the least probability of my getting business, be seconded by my having no brief here, I am not cast down. I attend diligently, I take good notes, I feel a gradual accession of knowledge, and I look forward with hope. Indeed, I was assured of three briefs at Newcastle before I left London. This is all *biographical*, as we have pleasantly talked.

Before I set out from Auchinleck, my wife had a very favourable remission of her severe and alarming complaints. The country air, asses' milk, the little amusements of ordering about her family, gentle exercise, and the comfort of being at home and amongst old and valuable friends, had a very benignant effect upon her; and I would fain flatter myself that she may recover, though not full health, yet such a degree of it as that she may enjoy life moderately well. Her preservation is of great importance to me and my children, so that there is no wonder that I suffer frequently from anxious apprehensions, which make me shrink. I sometimes upbraid myself for leaving her; but tenderness should yield to the active engagements of ambitious enterprise. I am not sure whether I shall go all round this circuit, though I rather think I shall, unless I hear that she is worse. But you will be very angry when I confess to you, that I have not yet advanced a single page in *Johnson's Life* since I left London. The truth<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Westminster Hall, where the trial of Hastings was held

<sup>2</sup> The rest of the letter is lost.

## 255. To Edmond Malone

My dear Malone,

Carlisle, 7 October 1788

Was ever any man more unlucky than I am at this time? Such tantalising do I experience. The rich letter—the constellation from yourself, Mr. Jephson, and Mr. Courtenay—was lying for me here. But alas! I found before I left Auchinleck that I could not raise £500 (which *must* be paid in London about the first of November) in the way that I was flattered to believe I could do it, so I am under the necessity of going back in order to get it. I hope a few days will suffice, and then I shall hasten to *town*. I beseech you to prevail on Mr. Jephson not to go till I get to you. I am exceedingly vain of his notice, and should be sadly mortified were I to miss him. O this *auri sacra fames*,<sup>1</sup> which I translate this cursed *want* of gold.

Pray give my best compliments to Mr. Jephson and to our excellent friend Courtenay. The description of your present situation enchants me. I trust I shall have one or two *noctes cœnæque Deum*<sup>2</sup>—ay and Dearum.

The *Life* shall be finished with assiduous dispatch, and we shall do nobly yet. I ever am

My dear Sir,

Most affectionately yours,

James Boswell.

## 256. To the Reverend William Temple

My dear Temple,

London, 10 January 1789.

Another sad interruption of our correspondence,<sup>3</sup> without any sufficient reason.—Soon after receiving your last, long, kind letter, I recovered my spirits pretty well, I know not how. A letter from my wife, recommending to me to take a house in a well aired situation determined me not to sell my furniture, as my doing so after what she wrote might appear like discouraging her from coming to me, which, though I could hardly

<sup>1</sup> *Aeneid*, iii. 57.<sup>2</sup> Horace, *Satires*, ii. 6. 65.<sup>3</sup> The interruption apparently ex-

tended from 25 February 1788 to the date of the present letter.

hope,

hope, would have made me very happy. It is incredible what difficulty I found in several weeks' wandering, to find a house that would answer ; and at last I fixed on one at £50, in Queen Anne Street, West Cavendish Square, very small but neat. It, however, would not accommodate the whole of my family with even tolerable conveniency ; but would serve as a sort of camp lodging till better could be had. In winter the upholsterers and brokers take numbers of houses and furnish them with old trash, and by letting them furnished get great profits. This makes it very difficult to get choice of unfurnished houses at that season. I am in a most *illegal* situation ; and for *appearance* should have cheap chambers in the Temple, as to which I am still *inquiring* ; but in truth I am sadly discouraged by having no practice, nor probable prospect of it. And to confess fairly to you, my friend, I am afraid that were I to be tried, I should be found so deficient in the *forms*, the *quirks* and the *quiddities* which early habit acquires, that I should expose myself. Yet the delusion of Westminster Hall, of brilliant reputation and splendid fortune as a barrister, still weighs upon my imagination. I must be *seen* in the courts, and must hope for some happy openings in causes of importance. The Chancellor, as you observe, has not done as I expected.<sup>1</sup> But why did I expect it ? I am going to put him to the test. Could I be satisfied with being Baron of Auchinleck, with a good income for a gentleman in Scotland, I might no doubt be independent. But what can be done to deaden the ambition which has ever raged in my veins like a fever ? In the country, I should sink into wretched gloom, or at best into listless dullness, and sordid abstraction. Perhaps a time may come when I may by lapse of time be grown fit for it. And yet I *really, from a philosophical spirit*, allow myself to be driven along the tide of life, with a good deal of caution not to be much hurt, and still flattering myself that an unexpected lucky chance may at last place me so that the prediction by a *fortunate cap* appearing on my head at my birth will be fulfilled.

My two boys are still in the house with me. The eldest is advancing both in Latin and Greek exceedingly well, by the

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 365 and 523-27, below.

assistance of one of the ushers of the Soho Academy; and the other goes on in Latin with him during this hard weather; but next week I am to send him again to that academy. I am sensible that it is a great disadvantage to them to be under my roof, as I am so much abroad, and then they must be with my Scotch housekeeper and footman, whom I yet retain on account of their fidelity and moderate wages. But I am affraid to send my eldest to a publick school with his rupture; the younger I shall send to one when he is a year older.

I am now very near the conclusion of my rough draught of *Johnson's Life*. On Saturday I finished the Introduction and Dedication to Sir Joshua, both of which had appeared very difficult to be accomplished. I am confident they are well done. Whenever I have completed the rough draught, by which I mean the work without nice correction, Malone and I are to prepare one half perfectly, and then it goes to press, where I hope to have it early in February, so as to be out by the end of May. I do not beleive that Malone's Shakespeare<sup>1</sup> will be much before me. His brother, Lord Sunderlin, with his Lady and two sisters, came home from a long tour on the Continent in summer last, and took a country house about twenty miles from town for six months. Malone lived with them, and so his labour was much intermitted.

I am very sorry to find that it is the most difficult thing you can imagine to get a boy not the son of a citizen into Christ's Hospital. Miss Palmer whom I have solicited cannot do it; and I am sure I have not a tenth part of that kind of interest which is required. You must think of something else for your nephew; and pray do not blame me, if I recommend aiming at humble situations. It is impossible in the nature of society that every branch of every creditable family can have that preference to others from generation to generation.

As to the Archbishop of York,<sup>2</sup> I had a letter to him from Mr. Batt, one of his particular freinds. He asked me to a private dinner; but a number of company came, and I had very little

<sup>1</sup> Both works were delayed. *Johnson*, 16 May 1791.  
 Malone's Shakespeare appeared in <sup>2</sup> Markham; see letter of 12 July  
 November 1790; *Boswell's Life of* 1788, above.

of his conversation, for he does not *shew away in talk* at his table. Upon a Sunday I was at the dinner which he gives in form to the judges and counsel upon the Northern Circuit, and a splendid dinner it was. Indeed, his table is princely. In the evening, departing, he whispered to me, 'Don't go; there's a bed for you'. So I and Mr. Law, King's Counsel, whose brother is married to his Lordship's eldest daughter, staid. His Lordship took me to walk with him through his delightful seat, and was quite easy. His conversation turned chiefly upon British antiquities in which he seemed to be deeply versed, and he said a good deal of Scotland, a considerable part of which he had seen some years ago. There is nothing of the pedagogue or the high priest in his domestick behaviour. He is all affability and even playfulness with his children. I believe I should leave a card at his door in town. I will do it.

As to my *canvas* in my own county, I started in opposition to a junction between Lord Eglintoune and Sir Adam Fergusson who were violent opponents, and whose *coalition* is as odious there as the *great* one is to the nation. A few *friends* and *real independent gentlemen* early declared for me. Three other noble lords, the Earls of Cassillis, Glencarn, and Dumfries have lately joined and set up a nephew of the Earl of Cassillis. A Mr. John Whitefoord, who as yet stands as I do, will, I understand, make a bargain with this last *alliance*. Supposing he does, the two great parties will be so poised, that I shall have it in my power to cast the ballance. If they are so piqued, that either will rather give the seat to me than be beaten by the other, I may have it. Thus I stand, and I shall be firm. Should Lord Lonsdale<sup>1</sup> give me a seat, he would do well; but I have no claim upon him for it.

General Paoli's steady kindness is indeed highly to be valued.

I have said nothing about the *Regency* because you have it all in the newspapers. (Pray *which* do you read?) Do you know I was at first carried away with the notion of the *right* having *devolved* to the Prince, and had almost written one of my very

<sup>1</sup> Lord Lonsdale had caused the dale's relations with Boswell, see election of Pitt (1781) as M.P. for letter of 9 February 1788, above, Appleby, Westmorland. For Lons- and below, *passim*.

warm popular pamphlets for it But Lord Lonsdale having been taken ill with a feverish disorder from which he is not yet quite free, so that I have not yet seen him for five weeks, so as to know his sentiments, I *prudently* refrained, and have become satisfied that I was wrong; for there is a King though his faculties be *suspended*<sup>1</sup> Pitt has behaved very ill in his neglect of me. I *now* think Dundas a sad fellow in his *private* capacity. He has used honest David *cruelly* I breakfasted today with Hawkins, he is, I beleive, a good man, but very mean for a man of his fortune. We *depend* on your coming to London in April or May. It will be *impossible* to bear another disappointment. Write soon to your ever affectionate

J. B.

## 257. To the Reverend William Temple

My dear Temple,

London, 16 February 1789.

I am longing much to hear from you My wife has had a return of her asthmatick fever; but it has not continued so long, or with such alarming symptoms as it did when it seised her the three last winters. But still you may imagine that I am not *easy*, being at this distance from her, and her state of health so uncertain. My eldest son advances exceedingly well both in Latin and Greek under the private tuition of one of the ushers of the Soho Academy, to which my youngest now goes. I am resolved to send him, when he is twelve, either to Eton or Westminster. When you come we shall *confer* as to that question. My book is now very near the conclusion of the rough draft. I hesitate as to going the spring Northern Circuit, which costs £50, and obliges me to be in rough, unpleasant company four weeks. I wish to keep *hovering* as an English lawyer, for I much fear, that *now* I should be more unhappy than ever in *Scotland*. Hawkins and I got into good social plight<sup>2</sup> this

<sup>1</sup> The king had been mentally incapacitated since the autumn. Fox supported the right of the Prince of Wales to assume the regency, without being subjected to Parliamentary restrictions. Pitt challenged the con-

stitutionality of this view, and the regency was conferred with limited powers. The king recovered in the spring of this year; see letter of 10 March, p. 362.

<sup>2</sup> 'State', 'condition'.

winter I dined at his house one day with the Hon. and Rev. Wm Stuart,<sup>1</sup> and they dined at mine a few days after, and we were exceedingly well.

There is just come out a publication which makes a considerable noise, and which will interest you particularly. The celebrated Dr. Parr<sup>2</sup> of Norwich, author of the extraordinary *Preface to Bellendenus*, has wickedly, shall we say<sup>3</sup> but surely wantonly, collected and published Warburton's juvenile translations, and *Discourse on Prodiges*, and Bishop Hurd's attacks on Jortin and Dr. Thomas Leland, with his *Essay on the Delicacy of Friendship*. The sheets will require ten franks, which would be too many at a time. They shall come gradually By this post I send you Parr's two prefaces and dedication, in which you will find *ardentia verba*<sup>3</sup> indeed, and uncommon keenness of severity to Hurd, such as cannot be justified unless great provocation has been given.

Public affairs are in a very dubious situation. I really do believe the King will recover; and I am told that neither the Duke of Portland nor Mr. Fox will accept of any part in an administration which is not likely to be permanent. I begin now to think that whatever administration should appoint you and me to good places would be the best. Lord Lonsdale is not yet out of his room; but I see his members<sup>4</sup> are in opposition.

<sup>1</sup> William Stuart (1755-1822), afterwards Archbishop of Armagh. 'Son of the Earl of Bute . . . being, with all the advantages of high birth, learning, travel, and elegant manners, an exemplary parish priest in every respect.' *Life*, iv. 199

<sup>2</sup> Hurd, who was Parr's diocesan, had recently published the collected works of Warburton. By way of attack upon him, Dr Parr reprinted two juvenile works which Hurd had omitted from this edition, together with two early pamphlets of Hurd's. These latter were attacks on the historians Jortin and Leland, in which Hurd appeared as a defender

of Warburton, and in which he employed harsh and acrimonious language. These he was anxious to forget. Parr's publication was called *Tracts by Warburton and a Warburtonian*, see Boswell's letter to Parr, 10 January 1791, below, p 411 and Cf p 345 above.

The Preface to the works of William Bellenden appeared in 1787. Parr contrived to make this work into a 'political manifesto' in praise of Fox, Burke, and Sheridan, and in denunciation of Pitt

<sup>3</sup> *verbum ardens*. Cicero, *Orator*, viii 27.

<sup>4</sup> 'Lord Lonsdale's Ninepins.'



Pitt (probably influenced by Dundas) has used me very ill. But I yet *cannot* relish the *Coalition*, especially that worthless minister, Lord North *Nous verrons*.

Let me know *when* you are to be in town. Remember it will not be possible to bear another disappointment. Lord Eliot<sup>1</sup> is vastly well. We have dined together several times—at the Literary Club—at Sir Joshua's—and at Mr. Metcalfe's.<sup>2</sup> Why does not his Lordship keep house here? I am told that, like myself, though lively in company, he is subject to depression of spirits, which makes any task, even that of entertainment of one's friends, a burthen. I have had only one *splendid* dinner in my small house here. The Bishop of Killaloe,<sup>3</sup> Sir Joshua, Windham, &c. &c.

My best compliments to Mrs. Temple, and love to your family.

Ever most affly. yours,

J. B.

## 258. To the Reverend William Temple

My dear Temple,

London, 5 March 1789.

For some days past I have been in such an anxious and distracted state, by the sad accounts that came to me of my wife's having had repeated returns of her distressing complaints, that I have not been able to answer your two last letters; for I had resolved to set out instantly for Auchinleck. Another letter from her, and one from my second daughter who is with her, have made me a little easier, and I wait for further accounts, having written to her physician in the country to send me a fair and explicate state. It vexes me to think that I should appear neglectful of so valuable and affectionate a wife and mother, by being here, but God knows how sincerely and tenderly I regard her. The asthmatick complaints with which she is afflicted made it adviseable for her to pass this winter in the country.

<sup>1</sup> See letter of 6 February 1784, 'animated conversation'. *Life*, iii. p. 319.

159.

<sup>2</sup> Philip Metcalfe, a friend of Johnson in his latter years, whom Boswell praises for his 'excellent table and

<sup>3</sup> Johnson's friend, Dr. Thomas Barnard.

I could

I could not stay there without stopping what has allready been delayed too long—the completion of my *Life of Johnson*, and taking myself out of the great wheel of the metropolis, from which I do hope that in time I shall have a capital prize. Whatever then I at times may *feel*, my *reason* acquits me from any blame in this separation. Comfort and encourage me, my dear freind You do it better than any body. In your last long letter, you have poured balm upon my sore mind. I indeed must acknowledge that, owing to the melancholy which ever lurks about me, I am too dissipated and drink too much wine. These circumstances I must restrain as well as I can.

This is to be a short letter, of which you will be so good as to accept, till I am more at leisure and more calm.

I never look at the foreign publications, which I am sensible is wrong. Courtenay knows them all I think. Florian is not worth your buying, nor Joséph. Indeed all your Abéls and such works, I should guess are fit only for milk-and-water minds. Barthélemy's *Voyage en Grèce*,<sup>1</sup> Courtenay says, is an admirable book. The younger Anacharsis is supposed to travel through that celebrated country when at its best, and is made to give an account of whatever an intelligent traveller would observe; and this not fancifully, for the authorities of the most faithful writers are quoted at the bottom of the page. The Chevalier Ramsay<sup>2</sup> has written his *Voyages de Cyrus* (which I have read) upon the same plan. David, with his usual activity and prudence, has both seen the book, which consists of several volumes, besides a volume of maps, and suggested that you should first be informed it is pretty dear—under £3 however—that you may consider. Courtenay commends much *Mœurs des Grecs* by Peur,<sup>3</sup> the author of *Recherches sur les Américains*. Will you have that too?

<sup>1</sup> Of the recent publications in the historical field, which Boswell has been investigating on behalf of Temple, he recommends J. J. Barthélemy, *Voyage du jeune Anacharsis en Grèce dans le milieu du quatrième Siècle avant l'ère vulgaire*. Paris, 1788.

<sup>2</sup> André Michel de Ramsay His

book, which appeared in 1727, was often reprinted, and was afterwards called *La Nouvelle Cyropédie, avec un Discours sur la Théologie et la Mythologie des Anciens*.

<sup>3</sup> So the manuscript seems to read. Boswell refers to Cornelius de Pauw (1739–99), a Dutch historian, author

Your story of the apparition is truly enough to 'give us pause'. I myself am much inclined to believe it. I am never startled by the *why*, because that may be objected to thousands and thousands of facts which, in this world of mystery, we are *sure* have happened. Malone and Sir Joshua *will* not believe it. They very erroneously, I think, maintain that, supposing the *appearance* or *imagination*, or whatever else it may be called, and also the corresponding death of Mr. Winyard to be ascertained, there may have been only *coincidence*. Courtenay (though an unbeliever in our revelation) admits that if the two facts be ascertained, there *may* have been a supernatural influence. He lays much stress upon the officers at the mess having laughed at Sherbrook and Winyard for months, as undoubted evidence that they saw or thought they saw the apparition at the time mentioned. *But* he requires proof that they *were* laughed at. It is well known how people exaggerate and vary accounts. Johnson taught me to cross-question in common life. I really think this story deserves to be thoroughly examined. Where is Winyard? Where are the officers who ridiculed him and Sherbrook at the mess? <sup>1</sup>

of *Recherches Philosophiques sur les Américains*, 3 volumes, 1768-70, and of *Recherches Philosophiques sur les Grecs*, 1778

<sup>1</sup> This story, known as that of 'Winyard's Ghost', is recorded in the memoir appended to A. P. Martin's *Life and Letters of Viscount Sherbrooke*, II 594. According to the tale, Sir John Coape Sherbrooke, then a captain in the army stationed in Nova Scotia, and George Winyard, lieutenant, witnessed the apparition of the latter's brother, whose death at the moment of the vision was later confirmed.

The *Farrington Diary*, 4 March 1795, contains the following passage, 'Boswell's, I dined at . . . Major Winyard confirmed <Boswell's> story to me of his having seen the apparition

of his Brother Jack, as it proved afterwards, in the hour of his death which happened at Kensington Palace in General Winyard's apartments. The Major was at that time in Nova Scotia, in barracks at Halifax, and not being very well, he, in company with Colonel Sherbrooke, who was also an invalid, declined going to the officers' mess and dined alone. The doors of the room were shut.—The figure of his brother appeared at his elbow. He cried out, "There is my brother." Col. Sherbrooke saw the figure and was equally surprised, and described it identically as it appeared to the Major.—They each wrote down the remarkable particulars; and four months afterwards when the ice broke, the packet from England brought an account of the death of

Adieu

Adieu for the present, my dear Temple. I hold myself in readiness to set out for Scotland in case of worse accounts. *Why* is this melancholy circumstance in the lot of *my family*? *Cui bono*? I adore and reverently wait for more light. Write to David about your books in case I should be gone. But pray give me some kind communications. I like your sitting up and writing to me when Mrs. Temple and your daughter were at the assembly. We are not *quite* young now.

I ever am most affectionately yours,

J. B.

P.S. Pray (by return of post) help me with a word. In censuring Sir J. Hawkins's book, I say 'there is throughout the whole of it a dark uncharitable cast which puts the most unfavourable construction on almost every circumstance of my illustrious friend's conduct'. Malone maintains *cast* will not do.<sup>1</sup> He will have *malignancy*. Is that not too strong? How would *disposition* do?

I have the pleasure to tell you, that a part of my *Magnum Opus* is now ready for the press, and that I shall probably begin to print next week. By all means call Lowther my patron. May he be so more and more.

Hawky is no doubt very malevolent. Observe how he talks of me as if quite unknown.<sup>2</sup>

John Wynyard, of the Guards, as above stated.' The story as here set forth does not agree in all details with that given by Martin.

<sup>1</sup> 'Hawkins's book' is the *Life of Dr Samuel Johnson*, London, 1787, which appeared as vol. 1 of the edition of Johnson's *Works* a second edition, 'revised and corrected', appeared in the same year. For Boswell's criticism of the biography see *Life*, i. 27.

The word *cast* was not changed; see the first edition of the *Life*, i. 3.

<sup>2</sup> The only reference to Boswell in Hawkins's *Life of Dr. Johnson* is on

p. 472, where, in the account of the tour to the Hebrides, he is described as 'Mr. James Boswell, a native of Scotland, and one that highly valued him [Johnson]'. Boswell's indignation arises from the fact that the success of the *Tour to the Hebrides* had already linked his name indissolubly with Johnson's. *En revanche*, Boswell refers to his rival as 'Mr. John Hawkins, an attorney' (*Life*, i. 190), and asserts that he had never seen him more than once, or possibly twice, in Johnson's company. (*Life*, i. 27).

## 259. To the Reverend William Temple

My dear Temple,

London, 10 March 1789.

David has found a Bipontine Ammianus Marcellinus<sup>1</sup> in two volumes but without notes. Let him know if he should buy it for you.

Since I wrote last, I have had two letters from my wife, which gave me rather better hopes; but by a letter which I have today from a relation, she is certainly very ill, having a severe cough, sweatings, and swelled legs. She has indeed had all these alarming symptoms before, and has recovered; but frequent relapses make her situation more dangerous. I wait with anxiety for a letter from a physician to whom I have written to see her as if on a visit of compliment (for she will not have one to attend her, thinking it of no use) and to send me a fair, explicate report. If he thinks her in immediate danger, I will go down directly and take Veronica with me, and perhaps the two boys also, that she may be soothed with all the comfort they can give her, which she surely deserves, as she has been the most affectionate mother. You will perceive in what a state of mind I must be at present. Yet, as London is the best place when one is happy, it is equally so when one is the reverse; for the power of being at once wrapped up in undisturbed privacy, by not being personally known, and having an influx of various ideas, by being in the midst of multitudes, cannot fail to dissipate many a cloud which would thicken and augment, and press upon the spirits in the country or in a narrow place. This day, for instance, I shall rove about the cities of London and Westminster in the evening, to contemplate the illuminations upon his Majesty's recovery. General Paoli kindly entertains me and Veronica and my sons and honest David, at dinner, and we shall thus be enlivened. Is it not true philosophy, my friend, to procure as much happiness, to make as much honey in life, as we can? I mean in consistency with all duties.

Should I be obliged to go to Scotland, you must delay your

<sup>1</sup> An edition of the eighteen books of Ammianus Marcellinus, published at Biponti (Zweibrücken) in 1786.

visit to town till I can meet you. An interview after so long an absence will be very valuable.

The General's carriage is to be here soon, so I must hasten to dress. I shall soon write to you as to the particulars in your last letters.

My best compliments to Mrs. Temple. Long may she be a comfort to you. Love to your young family.

I ever am

Most affectionately yours,

J. B.

## 260. To the Reverend William Temple

My dear Temple,

London, 16 March 1789

Except joining with David in thinking that you had better wait a little longer, and get Parr's publication for nothing <sup>1</sup>—this letter is to be solely about the apparition. Courtenay and Langton are just gone from me, after considering your very distinct and fair state <sup>2</sup> Courtenay is very much impressed. He evades the story of Lord Littelton, <sup>3</sup> by alledging that his Lordship grew more and more frightened as the predicted time approached, and in a panick swallowed some medical tincture so hastily as to be choaked by it, before his servant, who had stept out of the room, was returned. As to th[at], I must inquire Courtenay will be obliged to you if you can ascertain <whether> the *day* (for hour and minute are too precise) on which the appearance was seen by Sherbrook and Winyard was perfectly recollected by the other officers to coincide with the very day of Winyard's brother's death. And Langton having suggested that it is *possible* there may be a *jesting concert* to have a *regimental ghost* Courtenay also begs that you in whose *opinion* he will have confidence, may upon strict attention say if you have the least suspicion that the officers mean to join in

<sup>1</sup> It is probable that the sheets of Parr's pamphlet, which Boswell had promised (letter of 16 February, above) to send, had not arrived, and that Temple had asked to have a copy of the book bought for him.

<sup>2</sup> Wrongly altered to *statement* in 1857.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas, second Lord Lyttelton [d 1779] See *Life*, iv 298; Walpole, *Letters*, xi. 67 ff.

such an imposition. For my own part, I have no difficulty in believing the story to be supernaturally true.

I am ever most affectly yours,

J. B.

Did I mention to you that the physician wrote to me that my wife was rather easier ? But no letters for some days and several dreams distress me

## 261. To the Reverend William Temple

My dear Temple,

London, 31 March 1789.

Your last confirms me still more as to the story of the apparition. But I have not yet waited on Mr. Winyard ; for, alas, my dear friend, I have received very alarming accounts of the distress which my wife suffers, both in a letter from the physician and in one from herself. her expression is, ' my fever still continues, and I waste away daily '. I have been in wretched agitation since the day before yesterday when such melancholy information reached me. It is possible that a return of mild weather may relieve her, as has happened several times ; but we cannot be ignorant that each repeated attack makes her less able to recover ; and supposing that *now* the disease should increase, and, as sometimes happens, should take a rapid course, she may be carried off while I am four hundred miles from her. The alternative is dreadful, and though she with admirable generosity bids me not be in a haste to leave London (knowing my extreme fondness for it), I should have a heart as hard as a stone were I to remain here ; and should the fatal event happen in my absence, I should have a just upbraiding gloom upon my mind for the rest of my life. I have therefore resolved to set out early the day after tomorrow, and take Veronica with me. I do this with the entire approbation of Mrs. Stevenson, mistress of the boarding school, who said to me, ' It is a case not to be reasoned upon '. I would fain hope that the consolation and amusement of my company and that of our Queen Square daughter will with the advance of the season restore her to tolerable health, and then I shall return to town, to go forward with my great work. In the mean time as we

have

have of late, 'my old and most intimate friend', corresponded more frequently, pray let us continue to do so. Your letters, under Mr. Garforth's cover, will be punctually forwarded. You *must* not upon any account come to London, till I am there to meet you, which I flatter myself will be about the middle of May. It is *necessary* for me if *possible* to be back by the 25 of May, to appear as Recorder of Carlisle in a cause in the King's Bench. Pray let me have your fervent prayers for my wife's recovery. How much do I long to see you.

I unexpectedly met Nichols last Wednesday at a club at the Blenheim Tavern, Bond Street, of which I am an honorary member. We were civil to each other. I have not seen Jerningham's *Enthusiasm*,<sup>1</sup> but I shall look at it.

Do not tell worthy David that I mentioned particulars; but ask him as from yourself what they are, I have complained to you that Dundas has not behaved well to him. The fact is, on David's being obliged to quit Spain on account of the war, Dundas promised to my father that he would get him an office.<sup>2</sup> Some time after my father's death Dundas renewed the assurance to *me* in strong terms and told me he had said to Lord Caermarthen, 'It is a death-bed promise, and I *must* fulfill it'. Yet David has now been kept waiting above eight years, when he might have established himself again in trade, and notwithstanding Dundas's exorbitant power, has got no employment, though he is an intelligent, accurate, worthy man, and has declared his willingness to accept of any decent situation in any department. This is cruel usage. The patient firmness with which David behaves is very respectable. He is right in persevering, so as to leave Dundas no excuse for not keeping his word.

As to myself, Dundas though he *pledged himself* (as the modern phrase is) to assist me in advancing in promotion, and though

<sup>1</sup> The title of a poem published in 1789.

<sup>2</sup> In his *Letter to the People of Scotland on the . . . Lords of Session* (p. 61) Boswell asserts that it was Dundas who persuaded his father, 'a vener-

able judge, in the decline of his life, to embark in county politicks, from which he had ceased for twenty years'. The promise of David's preferment may well have been one of the results of this affair.



he last year assured me *upon his honour* that my *Letter* concerning the Scotch judges had made no difference,<sup>1</sup> yet, except when I in a manner compelled him to dine with me last winter, has entirely avoided me, and I strongly suspect has given Pitt a prejudice against me. The excellent Langton says it is disgraceful, it is utter folly, in Pitt not to reward and attach to his administration a man of my popular and pleasant talents, whose merits he has acknowledged in a letter under his own hand. He did not answer several letters which I wrote at intervals requesting to wait on him. I lately wrote to him that such behaviour to me 'is certainly not generous,—I think is not just—and (forgive the freedom) I doubt if it be wise. If I do not hear from you in ten days, I shall conclude that you are resolved to have no farther communication with<sup>2</sup> me; for I assure you, Sir, I am extremely unwilling to give you, or indeed myself, unnecessary trouble'. About two months have elapsed, and he *has made no sign*. How can I still delude myself with dreams of rising in the great sphere of life?—I will tell you—Lord Lonsdale who when he pleases has great power, in every administration, shews me more and more regard—and Sir Michael Le Fleming, Governour Penn, and Colonel Lowther, three of his members, assure me that he will give me a seat in Parliament at the general election. I do not reckon upon this. But the *peut-être* is animating.

I cannot help thinking with you that Pitt is the ablest and

<sup>1</sup> 'Yet I will do Mr. Dundas the justice to declare, that, large as his power is, he has not much abused it. He has, indeed, taken very good care of his relations'. And why should he not? Though, to be sure, flesh and blood must feel his having put his young nephew over the heads of I know not how many of us, as Solicitor General . . . I trust to the generosity of his feelings, that, as he *knows* he once did me a severe injury, which I have from my heart forgiven, he will be anxious to make me full amends, if ever it shall be in his

power. The desire of elevation is as keen in me as in himself, though I am not so well fitted for party exploits.' (*Letter to the People of Scotland*, pp. 60, 62).

In the *Life* (iii. 213), Boswell praises the eloquence of Dundas, despite his Scotch accent, adding 'This testimony I liberally give to the excellence of an old friend with whom it has been my lot to differ very widely upon many political topics, yet I persuade myself without malice.'

<sup>2</sup> Manuscript, *with with*.

most useful minister of any of those whom we know. Yet I am not sure that after the *pericula* which should give *caution*, others (and amongst them Burke, whom I visited yesterday, and found as ably philosophical in political disquisition as ever) might not do as well. And if he has treated me *unjustly* in his stewardship for the publick and behaved with ungrateful insolence to my *patron*, who first introduced him into publick life,<sup>1</sup> may I not warrantably arraign many articles and great ones too in his conduct, which I can attack with forcible energy? At present I keep myself quiet, and wait till we see how things will turn out. My candidateship in my own county is honourable, though I am between two great parties, any one of which could overwhelm me; but perhaps may rather let me come in by *bringing* me in *apparently* than be defeated by its opponent. You will forgive me for all this egotism.

You have not gratified me with a particular account of your young family, which pray do. I am vexed that I can see no way of obtaining the presentation to the Hospital for your nephew. Do not you think that the air of the west of England might do my wife good? But I fear she could not be persuaded to leave Auchinleck. How different are she and I. I was the *great man* (as we used to say) at the late drawing room in a suit of imperial blue lined with rosecoloured silk, and ornamented with rich gold-wrought buttons. What a motley scene is life.

I leave my sons in my house here with the old housekeeper and my footman. I *must* send the eldest from home; for he begins to oppose me, and no wonder.

Adieu, my dear Temple. My best compliments to Mrs. Temple and all your family. I am ever most affectionately yours,

James Boswell.

## 262. To George Henry Hutton<sup>2</sup>

Sir,

London, 2 April 1789.

Your letter dated 22 March having been directed to Ayrshire, has reached me here just as I was about to set out for

<sup>1</sup> Lonsdale had now turned all his tools against Pitt Collection. The recipient was George Henry Hutton (d. 1827), Scots

<sup>2</sup> From the original in the Adam antiquary and collector of ancient

Auchinleck. I do not delay to acknowledge the receipt of it, that you may in the mean time know, that I take in very good part your application to me, though we are not personally acquainted. The mutual communication of curious knowledge should be liberal, and you do me honour in supposing that it is in my power to answer your inquiries. I am afraid I shall not give you the satisfaction I should be happy to do, but you shall be welcome to what I can tell.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

James Boswell.

### 263. To the Reverend William Temple

My dear Temple,

Lowther, 22 May 1789.

Time and place should be indifferent to philosophy and friendship such as ours. Yet what reason have you and I to arrogate to ourselves any superiority or peculiar excellence? Would it be allowed to us by others, upon a perusal of our correspondence? I fear not. There is, however, a benignant principle in human nature which disposes men in general to have an irresistible predilection for themselves, and all that is connected with them as participating of themselves. Every man has a particular regard for his own person, be what it may, &c. &c. I need not expand the thought. You will at once see it in all its extent. This introduction arises from my being struck, so as almost to laugh by myself, at the strangeness of my having delayed, I know not how, day after day while at Auchinleck, to answer your truly kind letter of 26 April, and now sitting down here to do it, when I am upon the wing.

I found my dear wife as ill, or rather worse, than I apprehended. The consuming hectic fever had preyed upon her incessantly during the winter and spring, and she was miserably

ecclesiastical drawings. He was engaged in the compilation of a *Monasticon Scotiae*. It is probable that he asked Boswell for information respecting the ecclesiastical

remains of the Hebrides, which are mentioned not only in the *Tour to the Hebrides*, but in Johnson's *Journey*.

emaciated

emaciated and weak. The physician and surgeon-apothecary, whom she allows occasionally, though rarely, to visit her, told me fairly, as to a *man* able to support with *firmness* what they announced, that they had no hopes of her recovery, though she might linger they could not say how long in distress, nay might again as formerly have a respite of comparative ease. Oh! my dear old friend, how shocking was this to me. Alas, instead of having a manly firmness, I am more weak and effeminate in mind than the valuable woman herself. Added to her other complicated complaints, she has for some time had a most afflicting acidity in her stomach, so that she has no good digestion, but every thing that she eats and drinks becomes quite acrid, and thus she can receive very little sustenance, and the acrimony is such as to corrode and blister her tongue. I never knew any one in greater distress, except one gentleman, who died of that dreadful disorder, a cancer. She goes out an airing in the carriage every day, which for about three hours gives her some relief, and when her attention is taken off herself by family affairs, nay by the affairs of my estate, to both of which she is still wonderfully alive, she seems to be a good deal better. No man ever had a higher esteem or a warmer love of a wife than I of her. You will recollect, my Temple, how our marriage was the result of an attachment truly romantick. Yet how painful is it to me to recollect a thousand instances of *inconsistent* conduct. I can justify my removing to the great sphere of England, upon a principle of laudable ambition. But the frequent scenes of what I must call *dissolute* conduct are inexcuseable. Often and often when she was very ill in London have I been indulging in festivity with Sir Joshua Reynolds, Courtenay, Malone, &c. &c. &c., and have come home late, and disturbed her repose. Nay, when I was last at Auchinleck on purpose to soothe and console her, I repeatedly went from home and both on those occasions, and when neighbours visited me, drank a great deal too much wine. On Saturday last dining at a gentleman's house, where I was visiting for the first time and was eager to obtain political influence, I drank so freely that, riding home in the dark without a servant, I fell from my horse and bruised my shoulder severely. Next morning I had it  
examined

examined by a surgeon, who found no fracture or dislocation, but blooded me largely to prevent inflammation. While I was thus confined to bed, came a letter from Colonel Lowther, one of Lord Lonsdale's members, informing me that his Lordship would set out for London as soon as I arrived at Lowther and would be glad to have my company in the carriage with him. I expected such a letter because I was engaged to appear as Recorder of Carlisle, for the Corporation, in a cause brought against us in the King's Bench, which I knew was to come on this month or early in June. But I was in a great dilemma what to do. I was afraid I should not be able to travel; and to leave my wife in such a state was severe. She, with a spirit which I cannot enough admire, animated me to set out, which I accordingly did, resolved to return as soon as the business was over, and bring our two sons with me to be some comfort to her, while she can at all be sensible of it. His Lordship's *way* is exceedingly dilatory, so that we have not set out today as was proposed, and perhaps we may not go for a day or two longer. I philosophically resign myself to what may happen, this being (as Governour Penn<sup>1</sup> the American, one of his members and a sensible worthy fellow, says) a *school* of its own kind. My shoulder is more uneasy, and there is now an extended rheumatism through that arm, and part of the breast next to it, which I feel acutely, while I cannot put on and off my clothes without help. But I *will* go forward. To be *zealous* is with justice a strong recommendation; and such is his great Parliamentary influence, that, be the minister who will, he may, when he pleases, get almost any thing for a friend. I have no right to expect that he will give me a seat in Parliament, but I shall not be surprised if he does. *Entre nous* my chance for representing my own county is very small. There is a great coalition between Lord Eglintoune and Sir Adam Fergusson, formed and supported by Dundas. Against that there are three candidates, one who has a large number of votes, and two of us who have each such a number that he cannot succeed unless we both join him. It is possible that, by remaining firm, there may <be> such a throw of the dice or such a junction that I may be

<sup>1</sup> See letter of 28 November, p. 386.

member at least for a part of the Parliament. Mean time, *knowing my small chance*, I spend almost nothing in electioneering—yet keep up a spirited appearance.

At our last General Quarter Sessions I was elected chairman, or Praeses as we call it. I proposed and carried an address to the Prince of Wales, which I had prepared, expressing a grateful sense of his *publick* conduct with regard to the regency. You will allow, when you read it, that I have been very happy in wording it, so as all fair men must approve of it; for truly his Royal Highness (as far as we have a right to know) behaved admirably. I am carrying it up to be presented by the Earl of Eglintoune, accompanied by such of us justices as may be in London.<sup>1</sup> This will add something to my *conspicuousness*.<sup>2</sup>—Will that word do?—As to Pitt, he is an insolent fellow, but so able that I *must* upon the whole support him against the *coalition*. But I will *work* him; for he has behaved very ill to me. Can he wonder at my wishing for preferment, when men of the first family and fortune in Great Britain struggle for it? We shall see. Mean time the *attempt* rouses my spirits. What a state is my present—full of ambition and projects to attain wealth and eminence, yet embarrassed in my circumstances and depressed with family distress, which at times makes every thing in life seem indifferent. I often repeat Johnson's lines in his *Vanity of Human Wishes*,

Shall helpless man, in ignorance sedate,  
Roll darkling down the torrent of his fate?

Your account of your young family pleases me much, while I am at the same time struck with a strange memento how old we now are. May God bless them. My heart and that of my dear wife were tenderly touched with the very affectionate and, I am sure, sincere offer of accomodation by you and Mrs. Temple. I heartily wish she had been able and willing to accept of it. But *home* is her delight in health and solace in sickness. She has nothing of my roving disposition, who may very possibly be one day in Asia. You have told me that I was the most

<sup>1</sup> The address, which is printed in at the function. See letter of 2 Fitzgerald's *Life of Boswell*, 2. 61-3. August, p. 376.  
was presented; but Boswell was not <sup>2</sup> *Sic.*

*thinking* man you ever knew. It is certainly so as to my *own* life. I am continually *conscious*, continually *looking back* or *looking forward* and wondering how I shall feel in situations which I anticipate in fancy. My *journal*<sup>1</sup> will afford materials for a very curious narrative. I assure you I do not now live with a view to have surprising incidents, though I own I am desirous that my life should *tell*.

What aid can my dear wife have from religion except a pious resignation to the great and good God, for indeed she is too shrewd to receive the common topicks<sup>2</sup>. She is keen and penetrating. Is it not difficult to guard one's self from doubting or distrusting in some degree when one is deeply afflicted, and has no light in prospect<sup>3</sup>? How dismal, how affecting is it to me to see my cousin, my friend, my wife wasting away before my eyes; and the more distressing it is, that she is as sensible as ever, so that one cannot see *why* this is. I intreat all the comfort you can give. Write to me in London directly.

It is an additional vexation that my great work must be suspended for some time. But I cannot help it now. I was much too idle and dilatory for years. I hope in the course of the winter to have it out.

My best compliments to Mrs. Temple and love to your young family. I am ever, my dear friend,

Yours most affectionately,  
James Boswell.

## 264. To Lord Lonsdale<sup>2</sup>

Monday <? May, 1789>.

Mr. Boswell presents his respectful compliments to Lord Lonsdale, with thanks for the attention with which his Lordship

<sup>1</sup> This journal, like countless others of Boswell's, has disappeared. The collection of anecdotes, known as *Boswelliana*, the manuscript of which I have inspected, by the courtesy of the Marquis of Crewe, contains no date later than 1785. The only other note-book known is that in the

Adam Collection, which has been reproduced in facsimile by Mr. Adam.

<sup>2</sup> From the original in the Adam Collection. The date, which is uncertain, was suggested by the editor of the Morrison documents, and is based on the material of the preceding letter.

has been pleased to honour him. He is extremely sorry to be at all troublesome, but, as it is *really* of consequence to him to be in London as soon as possible, he will be very much obliged to his Lordship, if he will order a postchaise to carry him to Penrith this evening.

## 265. To the Reverend William Temple

My dear Temple,

Auchinleck, 3 July 1789.

Your letter upon my most severe loss proves that you are now the same steady and warm-hearted friend that I have ever known you. O my friend, this is affliction indeed. My two boys and I posted from London to Auchinleck, night and day, in 64 hours  $\frac{1}{4}$ . But alas! our haste was all in vain. The fatal stroke had taken place before we set out<sup>1</sup>. It was very strange that we had no intelligence whatever upon the road, not even in our own parish, nor till my second daughter<sup>2</sup> came running out from our house, and announced to us the dismal event in a burst of tears. O! my Temple! what distress, what tender painful regrets, what unavailing earnest wishes to have but one week, one day, in which I might again hear her admirable conversation and assure her of my fervent attachment, notwithstanding all my irregularities. It was some relief to me to be told that she had, after I was set out, mentioned what I think I wrote to you, that she had pressed me to go up and shew my zeal for Lord Lonsdale. But when, on my return, before the cause came on, I found that by my going away at that unlucky time I had not been with her to soothe her last moments, I cried bitterly and upbraided myself for leaving her, for she would not have left me. This reflection, my dear friend, will, I fear, pursue me to my grave. She had suffered a great deal from her disease for some weeks before her death. But the actual scene of dying itself was not dreadful. She continued quite sensible till a few minutes before, when she began to doze calmly, and expired without any struggle. When I saw

<sup>1</sup> In June 1789 the *Gentleman's Magazine* announced the death at Auchinleck of 'Mrs Boswell . . . wife of the celebrated Tounst', on the fourth day of that month.

<sup>2</sup> Euphemia

her,



her, four days after, her countenance was not at all disfigured. But alas to see my excellent wife, and the mother of my children, and that most sensible lively woman, lying cold and pale and insensible was very shocking to me. I could not help doubting it was a deception. I could hardly bring myself to agree that the body should be removed, for it was still a consolation to me to go and kneel by it, and talk to my dear dear Peggie. She was much respected by all who knew her, so that her funeral was remarkably well attended. There were nineteen carriages followed the hearse, and a large body of horsemen and the tenants of all my lands. It is not customary in Scotland for a husband to attend his wife's funeral. But I resolved, if I possibly could, to do her the last honours myself, and I *was* able to go through with it very decently. I privately read the funeral service over her coffin, in presence of my sons, and was relieved by that ceremony a good deal. On the Sunday after, Mr. Dun delivered, almost verbatim, a few sentences which I sent him as a character of her. I imagined that I should not be able to stay here after the sad misfortune. But I find that I cling to it with a melancholy pleasure.

Honest David is perpetually pressing my confining my family to Scotland. But alas, my dear friend, should I or could I be satisfied with narrow provinciality which was formerly so irksome, and must now be much more so? I have agreed that my second daughter shall pass this winter at Edinburgh as she has desired it, in order to finish her education. But were my daughters to be *Edinburgh-mannered girls*, I could have no satisfaction in their company. Veronica wishes to be boarded this winter with a lady in London. Little Betsy, who is just nine year old, goes tomorrow to a quiet boarding school at Ayr, our county town, till I settle where to place her for a year or two. I am thinking of a convent in France, or rather in Flanders, where she can be well educated a certain length very cheap, and then I would finish her at one of the great English boarding schools. Yet if I can find a good and cheap English one, I may probably not send her abroad. Can you and Mrs. Temple advise me? My eldest son, I am resolved, shall go to Eton this winter. I am to have only chambers in the Temple after Christmas.

Christmas. I may perhaps come to you in autumn, if Malone goes to Ireland, so that the revising of *Johnson's Life* cannot proceed till winter. I am much obliged to you for your prayer. I *experience* that piety affords the only true comfort. My kindest love to you and yours. I am forcing myself to be as busy as I can, and think of going the Northern Circuit.

Ever most affectly yours,

J. B.

Pray write often, though but a few lines.

## 266. To the Reverend William Temple

My dearest Temple,

Auchinleck, 2 August 1789.

A more comforting letter than your last never was received by a friend. I am now quite settled as to my daughters. The eldest goes to Mrs. Buchanan's, the good widow lady with an accomplished daughter, in London, where she will be exceedingly well as a friendly boarder; the second goes for one year to Edinburgh to a boarding school, where her education will be completed, and she will have countenance shewn her by many good friends of her valuable mother. And little Betsy, nine years old, shall be left by me at the place which, you satisfy me, is the very best for her. The distance no doubt is *some* objection, but not so strong as there would be to a convent, because I can see her sooner; and the very kind offer that she shall be with you and Mrs. Temple in the holidays, for which I most heartily thank you, and of which I shall frankly accept, is perfectly decisive. I cannot yet resolve whether I shall come to you this month so as to be at Carlisle the beginning of October, as my office of Recorder obliges me to be there annually at Michaelmas; or whether I shall keep up appearances by going a part of the Northern Circuit, and not be with you till after Michaelmas, when I imagine the weather is sufficiently favourable for viewing the Land's End.

My immediate object is our county election of an interim member, in room of Colonel Montgomerie, who has got a place of £500 a year. Dundas is insolently forcing upon us a gentleman from another county, which I and the other two declarants as

candidates at the general election against *his* candidate *now* unite to resist. Tomorrow is the election day. I fear we shall lose it. But we shall make an admirable figure. To own the truth, I have very little chance for success at the general election. But I may perhaps negotiate for a *part* of the Parliament. The Prince of Wales has received our address most graciously, and I am to be presented to his Royal Highness,<sup>1</sup> who desired it might be signified that he regretted Mr. Boswell was gone from town.

By all these means, my dear friend, my attention is a good deal dissipated. But I feel that the great and pathetick deprivation which I have suffered distresses me at frequent intervals more than at first. Gracious God, grant me resignation and hope. O! my friend, you shall know what I endure when we meet.

My very best compliments to Mrs Temple and love to your young family.

Ever most affectly yours,

J. B.

Pray be good enough to write often.

## 267. To the Reverend William Temple

My dear Temple,                      Rose Castle,<sup>2</sup> Sunday, 23 August 1789.

I left Auchinleck with intention to join the Northern Circuit at Carlisle. I went first to Lowther, the great man having invited me by a letter to come to him as soon as I should find it convenient. My mind was so sore from my late severe loss that I shrunk from the *rough* scene of the roaring, bantering

<sup>1</sup> No record of such a meeting exists.

<sup>2</sup> The episcopal palace of John Douglas (1721-1807), Bishop of Carlisle and, later, of Salisbury. He became Dean of Windsor in the preceding March. He was a member of the Literary Club and a friend of Johnson, whom he assisted in the detection of the Cock Lane ghost.

Boswell called him the 'great detector of impostures' (Cf *Life*, 1 229). It is improbable that the Bishop was in residence at Rose Castle during this visit of Boswell's. Had he talked with Boswell about the loss of his wig, he might, perhaps, have assisted in the detection of another obvious imposture.

society of lawyers. I consulted Lord Lonsdale who thought I might stay away, as I had a very good excuse. I accordingly remained at Lowther. Still, I was in sad distress, though I forced an appearance of doing wonderfully well.

A strange accident happened. The house at Lowther was so crowded that I and two other gentlemen were laid in one room. On Thursday morning my wig was amissing. A strict search was made, all in vain. I was obliged to go all day in my night-cap and absent myself from a party of ladies and gentlemen who went and dined with the Earl on the banks of a lake—a piece of *amusement* which I was glad to shun, as well as a *dance* which they had at night. But I was in a ludicrous situation. I suspected a wanton trick, which some people think witty; but I thought it very ill timed to one in my situation. Next morning the Earl and a Colonel who I thought might have concealed my wig, declared to me upon honour they did not know where it was, and the conjecture was that a clergyman who was in the room with me and had packed up his portmanteau in a great hurry to set out in the morning early, might have put it up among his things. This is very improbable; but I could not long remain an object of laughter. So I went 25 miles to Carlisle on Friday, and luckily got a wig there fitted for me in a few hours. Yesterday I came to this seat of the Bishop, where I find myself somewhat easier, there being more quietness. His Lordship's chaplain read prayers and preached to us in his chapel today. The scene is fine externally; and hospitable and quiet within. But alas! my grief preys upon me night and day. I am amazed when I look back. Though I often and often dreaded this loss, I had no conception how distressing it would be. May God have mercy upon me. I am quite restless and feeble and desponding. I return to Lowther tomorrow for two days, to shew that I am not at all in pet, and then I am to return to Auchinleck for a little time.

Such is my melancholy frame at present, that I waver as to all my plans. I have an *avidity* for death. I *eagerly* wish to be laid by my dear dear wife. Years of life seem insupportable. I dread that Eton may make my son expensive and vicious, and it seems hard to send my little daughter two hundred miles  
beyond

beyond London. Every prospect that I turn my mind's eye upon is dreary. *Why* should I struggle? I certainly am *constitutionally* unfit for any employment. The law life in Scotland, amidst vulgar familiarity, would now quite destroy me. I am not able to acquire the law of England. To be in Parliament, unless as an independent member, would gall my spirit. To live in the country would either harrass me by forced exertions, or sink me into a gloomy stupor. Let me not *think* at present; far less *resolve*. The LIFE OF JOHNSON still keeps me up. I *must* bring that forth, and then I think I may bury myself in London, in total obscure indifference, and let the savings of my estate accumulate for my family.

God bless you, my dear friend. What a blessing is it to me that I have through all the vicissitudes of my life had my Temple. But alas! alas! am I certain, one hour, of retaining him?—and—when the fatal news arrives that he is gone (if it arrives to me), how am I to support it?

Almighty and most merciful Father! let me never impiously repine. May I be enabled by thy grace *really* to submit myself *entirely* to thy divine will. Yet as 'Jesus wept' for the death of Lazarus, I hope my tears at this time are excused.

How much do I regret that I have not applied myself more to learning. *Adversis perfrugium et solatium praebeant*<sup>1</sup> is, I believe, literally true of *studia* in a certain degree. The woeful circumstance of such a state of mind as I now experience is that it *rejects* consolation. It feels an *indulgence* in its own wretchedness. O! my friend! what would I now give for one of those years with my dearest cousin, friend, and wife, which are past. May I not flatter myself with a dawn of hope that I shall be permitted to see her again, ay, and to be with her, not to be separated? *What* can one think? *What* can one do in so wretched a state as this? She used on all occasions to be my comforter. She, methinks, could *now* suggest rational thoughts to me. But *where* is she? O my Temple, I am miserable. It is astonishing what force I have put upon myself since her death; how I have entertained company, &c. &c. But all this makes me worse. Is it *possible* that I yet can have any

<sup>1</sup> Cicero, *Pro Archia*, chap. 7.

enjoyment in this state of being.<sup>1</sup> My kindest compliments to all your family. Value Mrs. Temple warmly while you have her. Write to me under cover of Mr. Garforth. Ever, ever most affectionately yours,

James Boswell.

## 268. To the Reverend William Temple

My dear Temple,

London, 13 October 1789.

Believe me, I cannot sufficiently thank you for the comfort your last most friendly letter gave me. Your kindness has all advantages; it is wise, virtuous, and pleasing. I thank God, my mind has attained more composure than when I wrote to you from the Bishop of Carlisle's. But the truth is that I am in a kind of dissipated stupor, and am affraid to think. I left Auchinleck on the 1st of this month. I had before that gone to Carlisle and met Lord Lonsdale, to licence the publicans. All went on well, and I returned for some time to Auchinleck. My eldest son and I were a night at Lowther in my way to town. My wig was found, and the way in which it was lost will remain as secret as the authour of Junius.

Upon consideration, and hearing my friends here, I cannot think of sending little Betsy so far as Devonshire, especially as she would be above seventy miles from your house. I am warmly thankful to you and Mrs. Temple for your kind offers; but I am inquiring for a boarding school in the neighbourhood of London. This being now my resolution, I defer my visit to you. Malone who obligingly revises my *Life of Johnson* is to go to Ireland when his Shakspeare is published which will be about Christmas.<sup>1</sup> I am therefore to get as much of his time as may be, while he remains, as he may not return from Ireland till the summer. I think of visiting you in the Christmas holidays, or perhaps not till spring or summer. We shall *consult* in mutual letters.

Sir Joshua Reynolds' loss of the sight of one eye,<sup>2</sup> and weak-

<sup>1</sup> See letter of 10 January, above.

<sup>2</sup> Reynolds's sight had begun to fail in the preceding July.

ness of the other, you may believe, must afflict him deeply. He is another instance of *dici beatus ante obitum nemo*.<sup>1</sup> His friends are assiduous in consoling him.

I shall write more fully soon, and, offering my best compliments to your family I ever am, my dear Temple,

Your most affectionate friend,

James Boswell.

14 October.

Having been too late for the post yesterday, I have opened my packet, to add a little to this letter. David has told me of your proposal to take two shares in the tontine, and in what a friendly manner you have written to him concerning the £200 which I owe you. I have written to my agent at Edinburgh pressing, to exert *<himself>* in getting me payment of what is due to me, and I hope by January to be able to answer your *convenience*, for I cannot say *demand*. If not, a little longer delay may not be very inconvenient; and I will at all events have your money ready before the tontine is closed. How unpleasant is it to be straitened in our *circumstances*, as the phrase is. Yet this I have been for twenty years, and, I dread, must be so I know not how long. I must reckon my children at £100 a year each—£500—after which, I reckon I cannot command more than £350. I am looking for chambers in the Temple. I am not at all well today. I have had a restless night, and many painful thoughts of my irreparable loss. Yesterday afternoon Malone and I revised and made ready for the press the first thirty pages of *Johnson's Life*. He is much pleased with it. But I feel a sad indifference, and he says I have not the use of my faculties. They have been torpid for some time, except in conversation. I hope to recover them. I go to Eton tomorrow with my eldest son. I was there last week to prepare matters, and, to my agreeable surprise, found myself highly considered there, was asked by Dr. Davies, the Head Master, to dine at the Fellows' table, and made a creditable figure. I certainly have the art of making the most of what I have. How should one who has had only a Scotch education be quite

<sup>1</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, III. 136.

at home at Eton<sup>†</sup> I had my classical quotations very ready. I have drunk too much wine for some time past. I fly to every mode of agitation. I am now to try fixing my attention on my *Magnum Opus*

## 269. To the Reverend William Temple

My dear Temple, London, 28 November 1789.

Let me address you from *Cato*,

Thou best of friends,

Pardon a weak, distemper'd soul that swells

In sudden gusts, and sinks again in calms.<sup>1</sup>

Your last letter supposes too truly my situation. With grief continually at my *heart* I have been endeavouring to seek relief in dissipation and in wine, so that my life for some time past has been unworthy of myself, of you and of all that is valuable in my character and connections. For a week past I have *taken up*, as the common phrase is, and by a more regular and quiet course, find myself I think rather better. I cannot express to you, Temple, what I suffer from the loss of my valuable wife and the mother of my children. While she lived, I had no occasion almost to think concerning my family. Every particular was thought of by her, better than I could. I am the most helpless of human beings I am in a state very much that of one in despair.

30 November.

I have though, I assure you, a constant solace to my unhappiness in thinking of you, whose friendship I have tried and found constant for more than half my life, and whose worth my popish imagination cannot help somehow viewing as a kind of *credit*, on which I may in part repose.

My apology for not coming to you, as I fully intended and wished, is really a sufficient one; for the revision of my *Life of Johnson* by so acute and knowing a critick as Mr. Malone is of most essential consequence, especially as he is *Johnsonianissimus*, and as he is to hasten to Ireland as soon as his Shakspeare is

<sup>†</sup> Act I, scene 1, last speech.

fairly



fairly published, I must avail myself of him *now*. His hospitality—and my other invitations—and particularly my attendance at Lord Lonsdale's have lost us many evenings; but I reckon that a third of the work is *settled*, so that I shall get to press very soon. You cannot imagine what labour, what perplexity, what vexation, I have endured in arranging a prodigious multiplicity of materials, in supplying omissions, in searching for papers, buried in different masses—and all this besides the exertion of composing and polishing. Many a time have I thought of giving it up. However, though I shall be uneasily sensible of its many deficiencies, it will certainly be to the world a very valuable and peculiar volume of biography, full of literary and characteristical anecdotes (which word, by the way, Johnson always condemned as used in the sense that the French, and we from them, use it, as signifying *particulars*)<sup>1</sup> told with authenticity and in a lively manner. Would that it were in the booksellers' shops. Methinks, if I had this *Magnum Opus* launched, the publick has no farther claim upon me; for I have promised<sup>2</sup> no more, and I may die in peace or retire into dull obscurity, *reddarque tenebris*.<sup>3</sup> Such is the gloomy ground of my mind, that any agreeable perceptions have an uncommon though but a momentary brightness. But alas, my friend, be the *accidents* as they may, how is the *substance*? How am I? With a pious submission to God, but at the same time a kind of obstinate feeling towards men, I walk about upon the earth with inward discontent, though I may appear the most cheerful man you meet. I may have many *gratifications*; but the *comfort* of life is at an end.

I shrunk on a near approach of the time, from sending my youngest daughter to such a distance. Indeed, Sir Joshua said

<sup>1</sup> In 1755 Johnson defined the word as 'something yet unpublished, secret history'. According to the *New English Dictionary*, the more common meaning entered the language about 1760. This meaning is recognized by Johnson in the fourth edition of his *Dichonary* (1773)

<sup>2</sup> In the first edition of the *Tour*

to the Hebrides (1785), Boswell had advertised as 'Preparing for the Press, in one Volume Quarto, The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D. By James Boswell, Esq.' This was announced as to be based on materials which the author had been collecting 'for more than twenty years'.

<sup>3</sup> *Aeneid*, vi 545.

there would be a loss of all natural affection ; and considering that she was not to be in your neighbourhood either, I placed her at Mr. Hockley's at Blacklands House, Chelsea, a very excellent boarding school, where I intend she shall be for some years, without being a single night from it, that I may have *one* unindulged, *English* daughter, of whom I fancy myself to be vain. She is very pretty and very clever.

As for the other four who have all been too much indulged, my second daughter is at a good boarding school at Edinburgh, and under the inspection of her *grandmamma*, as my father's widow is called, who, I must say, is exceedingly good to her. How much better is it that I am on decent terms with that lady.—My eldest daughter is at the house of a lady here, a Mrs Buchanan, with whose daughter, a very accomplished girl, Veronica is very intimate. But I can perceive already that my daughter will not long be happy in that situation, and the second one must escape from school in a year. What, then, is to become of them ? I am utterly at a loss. They cannot live with satisfaction or even propriety in a house here with me, as I am very little at home, cannot afford to keep a carriage &c., and have nobody to take them out to visit or to publick places. Undoubtedly my having a house in Edinburgh would be best for *them* ; but besides that my withdrawing thither would cut me off from all those chances which *may* in time raise me in life, I could not possibly endure Edinburgh now, unless I were to have a judge's place to bear me up ; and even then I should sigh deeply for the metropolis. Malone advises me to find some respectable elderly lady, who, though well bred and well connected has little fortune, and would be glad to be a companion and superintendent of them, from the consideration of being comfortably accommodated and having £30 or £40 to buy clothes. But *my* daughters are not what girls of 15 and 16 commonly are. They are exceedingly advanced for their years, and would not submit to such a woman ; nor have I almost any *authority* over them. My only hold is their *affection*. To place them at Auchinleck by themselves would be wrong, and I am unlucky enough to have no female relation whatever with whom they could live, except my stepmother, and she could not

take the trouble of having them with her. Is not this a sad situation? I have no guess what will be done. I have given up my house and taken good chambers in the Inner Temple to have the *appearance* of a lawyer. O! Temple, Temple, is this realising any of the towering hopes which have so often been the subject of our conversations and letters? Yet I live much with a Great Man<sup>1</sup> who, upon any day that his fancy shall be so inclined, may obtain for me an office which would make me independent. The state of my affairs is very disagreeable. (But be not afraid for your £200, as you may depend upon its being repaid.) My rent roll is above £1600, but deducting annuities, interest of debts, and expence absolutely necessary at Auchinleck, I have but about £850 to spend. I reckon my five children at £500 a year. You see what remains for myself. I am this year to make one trial of the Lord Chancellor. In short I cast about every where. I do not see the smallest opening in Westminster Hall. But I like the scene, though I have attended only one day this last term, being eager to get my *Life of Johnson* finished. —And the delusion that practice *may* come at any time (which is certainly true) still possesses me.

My eldest son has been at Eton since the 15 of October. You cannot imagine how miserable he has been. He wrote to me for some time as if from the galleys, and intreated me to come to him. I did what was better; I sent his uncle David, who was firm, and brought me back a good report—that there was no reason to pity him. I have delayed and delayed going; and I can perceive he hardens. Perhaps I may go before the holidays commence, which will be on the 10th of this month. I mean that he shall be two years at Eton, then two at Edinburgh, and then study civil law &c., in Holland and Germany. If he lives he will have £3000 a year; for my estate is rising every year, and the lands life-rented by my stepmother, if properly managed, would yield £500 a year.

My second son<sup>2</sup> is an extraordinary boy. He is much of his

<sup>1</sup> Lord Lonsdale.

<sup>2</sup> James Boswell the younger (1778-1822) inherited many of his father's more lovable characteristics and none

of his genius. He carried on the Shakespearian work of Edmond Malone after the latter's death. As his father hoped, he became a barrister.  
father.

father. (Vanity of vanities!) He is to be a barrister, and I am very desirous to train him properly. He is of a delicate constitution, but not unhealthy, and his spirit never fails him. He is still in the house with me, indeed he is quite my companion, though only eleven in September. He goes in the day to the academy in Soho Square kept by the Rev. Dr. Barrow,<sup>1</sup> formerly of Queen's, Oxford, a coarse North-countryman, but a very good scholar, and there my boy is very well taught. After the holidays I am to take resolution and board my little James *somewhere*, for while under my roof he passes his time chiefly with my old housekeeper and my footman. What shall I do? Soho is a competently good place; but there are few boys there but of an inferior rank. Yet is it not injustice to a good master, should I remove my son? The boy wishes much to go to Eton because his brother is there. I, on the other hand, think it better they should be separate, and wish to place him at Westminster. To that there is the objection of danger to his morals, which however is answered by the boys there not being worse than at other schools, and by the first people in the nation continuing to keep their sons there. The *éclat* of Westminster, I think, would be of service to him, and I have a great respect for Dr. Vincent<sup>2</sup> the present Head Master. I am not sure whether I have mentioned to you with what respect I found myself treated at Eton; how, the first time I went, Dr. Davies carried me to dine with him at the Fellows' table, and the next time had me to dine at his own house with an excellent company, both ladies and gentlemen. I certainly have some *talent* at making the most of myself—to a certain extent. But I have as yet done nothing essential and permanent for my advantage.

I cannot help thinking how strangely it has happened that I have never yet had, properly speaking, the advantages of a man of fortune, but have been continually straitened. My excellent wife was at less expence than any woman, even of much inferior rank, and my genteel appearance has been occasional only. Yet I do believe I have had more *enjoyment*

<sup>1</sup> William Barrow (1754–1836), afterwards Archdeacon of Nottingham.  
<sup>2</sup> William Vincent (1739–1815), afterwards Dean of Westminster.

than many who have grand establishments. I have above £1000 due to me out of the patrimonies of my wife's nephews, which I hope will be paid in the course of a year and one half, a part of it this year, when I hope also to get payment of poor Johnston's debt.

The week before last I indulged myself in giving one dinner.—I had Wilkes, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Flood the Irish orator, Malone, Courtenay, Governour Penn, grandson of old William and who brought over the petition from Congress, which was obstinately and unwisely rejected, and my brother David. We had a very good day. Would I were but able to give many such dinners. Malone gives them without number. Last Sunday I dined with him, with Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir Joseph Banks, Mr. Metcalfe, Mr. Windham, Mr. Courtenay, and young Mr. Burke, being a select number of Dr. Johnson's friends, to settle as to effectual measures for having a monument erected to him in Westminster Abbey. It is to be a whole length statue of him by Bacon, which will cost £600. Sir Joshua and Sir William Scott, his executors, are to send circular letters to a number of people, of whom we made a list as supposing they will contribute. Several of us subscribed five guineas each, Sir Joshua and Metcalfe ten guineas each, Courtenay and young Burke two guineas each. Will not you be one of us, were it but for one guinea? We expect that the Bench of Bishops will be liberal, as he was the greatest supporter of the hierarchy. That venerable sound brings to my mind the ruffians in France who are attempting to destroy all order ecclesiastical and civil. The present state of that country is an intellectual earthquake, a whirlwind, a mad insurrection without any immediate cause, and therefore we see to what a horrible anarchy it tends. I do not mean that the French ought not to have a *Habeas Corpus* Act. But I know nothing more they wanted.

I wish you joy of your young sailor's<sup>1</sup> return. What a feeling must it have been to see him again after a three years' absence. You must be somewhat in the situation of a hen who has hatched

<sup>1</sup> Francis. Four years later he received his commission as lieutenant; in 1803 he was promoted to be commander; in 1805 to be captain;

in 1837, on his retirement from the navy, to be rear-admiral. In 1847 he received the rank of vice-admiral, and that of admiral in 1854.

ducks. A sea life must seem very unnatural to you. I am sure it does so to me.

Is not this a long letter? But it is too much about myself. Alas I read almost nothing. I am however just ending *The European Settlements in America*, for the first time. It is an admirable compend. Burke said to me 'I did not write it, I do not deny that a friend did, and I revised it'. Malone tells me that it was written by Will Burke, the cousin of Edmund, when they were in Wales, but it is every where evident that Burke himself has contributed a great deal to it.<sup>1</sup>

Now, my dear friend, let not your correspondence flag. Let us write often, though short. Perhaps you will be here in the spring. My visit to you must be deferred till my work is printed and the weather is fine. Poor John Dun will be a sad loser by his *Sermons &c. &c.*<sup>2</sup> Could you get him no subscribers? Best comps. to Mrs. Temple and love to all yr. children.

Ever, ever yours,

J. B.

Dr. Kippis makes a strange kettle of fish of the *Biographia*.<sup>3</sup>

## 270. To the Reverend William Temple

My dear Temple,

London, 8 February 1790.

It is a long time since I wrote you a letter of twelve pages,<sup>4</sup> to which I have received no return, and, notwithstanding our

<sup>1</sup> This is the view now generally accepted of the authorship of the *Account of the European Settlements in America*. The two relatives had worked on the book together in 1752.

<sup>2</sup> John Dun, pastor of the chapel at Auchinleck, had been Boswell's earliest teacher. He published his sermons at Kilmarnock in 1790, in two volumes. He had preached at the funeral of Lord Auchinleck and at that of Mrs. Boswell—hence Boswell's interest. In the list of subscribers, Boswell's name is set down for six copies.

<sup>3</sup> In this year Andrew Kippis

(1725–95), editor of the second edition of the *Biographia Britannica*, had published the fourth volume of that work, 'Cole-Davies'. Boswell's criticism may be directed at the slightness of attention given to such men as Captain Cook and Thomas Chatterton (who is included in an appendix), at the arrangement of the volume, with its bewildering addenda and appendices; or at the inclusion of a disproportionate number of dissenting divines. With regard to this latter point, see *Life*, iii. 174.

<sup>4</sup> The preceding letter in this collection.

mutual

mutual allowance for unaccountable indolence and procrastination, I am uneasy at your long silence. Pray then write.

Both my sons have had severe rash fever. The eldest after much childish murmuring reconciled himself to Eton. He came home for the holidays, but was soon taken ill, and is yet so weak that he is not returned to school, though it is three weeks after the time. I hope to have him at his proper station in a day or two. My second boy, after the rash was over, had a severe fever produced by the dregs of the rash-fever, so that I was much alarmed for him, and called Dr. Warren, who attended him for some time. I thank God he is now pretty well. By Dr. Warren's advice I am now resolved to send him to Westminster School. Warren has three of his own sons there, and assures me that they are very healthy. I still keep on my house in Queen Ann Street West, having taken it till midsummer, upon my finding that chambers in the Temple which I thought I had secured, were let to me by a person who had not a right. It is better that I am still here; for I am within a short walk of Mr. Malone, who revises my *Life of Johnson* with me. We have not yet gone over quite a half of it; but it is at last fairly in the press. I intended to have printed it upon what is called an *English* letter, which would have made it look better; but, upon calculation, it would have made two quarto volumes; and two quarto volumes for one life would have appeared exorbitant,<sup>1</sup> though in truth it is a view of much of the literature and many of the literary men of Great Britain for more than half a century.<sup>2</sup> I have therefore taken a smaller type called *pica*, and even upon that I am affraid its bulk will be very large. It is curious to observe how a printer calculates. He averages a number of pages and the words in them, at different parts of the *copy* (as the M.S. is called), and so finds the number of words.—Mine here are *four hundred and one thousand and six hundred*. Does not this frighten you? By printing a page, the number of words it holds is discovered; and, by dividing the sum total of words by that number, we get the number of

<sup>1</sup> It was in this form, however, that the book finally appeared.

<sup>2</sup> The words *much of* and *many of*

in this sentence are later additions in Boswell's hand.

pages. Mine will be, we reckon, 800.<sup>1</sup> I think it will be, without exception, the most entertaining book you ever read. I cannot be done with printing before the end of August.

You will have seen that Johnson's friends are exerting themselves for his monument, which is to cost 600 guineas. We have now near to £400 of the money. Can we have no Cornish coin? I wish you could assist us in your neighbourhood. As your character of Gray was adopted by him,<sup>2</sup> it would appear well if you sent two guineas.

We shall have a great dispute as to the epitaph. Flood the Orator,<sup>3</sup> though a distinguished scholar, says it should be in English as a compliment to Johnson's having perpetuated our language. He has comprised his opinion in these lines,

'No need of Latin or of Greek to grace  
Our Johnson's memory and inscribe his grave;  
His native tongue demands this mournful space,  
To pay the immortality he gave'.

The post bell summons me to conclude; with best compliments to Mrs. Temple, and love to your children, from your most affectionate friend,

James Boswell.

P.S. Is there any doubt of your coming to London this year? Surely not. It is a heaven upon earth—*comparatively*.

## 271. To the Reverend William Temple

My dear Temple,

London, 13 February 1790.

Your few lines of the 6th warmed my heart. I fully excuse you for your long silence, and sincerely sympathise with you while under the pressure of 'that uncomfortable indolence' which I know so well. I also know how grateful it is to a man in that state to have the animated attention of his friends,

<sup>1</sup> The fact that in the first edition as finally published there were over a thousand pages shows how the work had grown while under the author's hand.

<sup>2</sup> That is, in Johnson's *Life of Gray*, *Lives of the Poets* (Hill, iii.

429, note 4)

<sup>3</sup> For Flood, see letter of 9 February 1788, p. 340. His verses were not adopted, but Boswell printed them in the *Life* (iv. 424). The inscription finally accepted was written by Dr Parr, in Latin.

especially



especially those who are in the metropolis, to whom he *looks up* ; and as by God's mercy I am at present wonderfully well, I shall endeavour to write to you often, and to supply you with spirits from my store. I cannot account for my 'healthful mind' at this time. There is no change to the better in my circumstances. I have no better prospect of gratifying my ambition or of increasing my fortune. The irreparable loss of my valuable wife, the helpless state of my daughters, in short all that ever hung heavy upon me is still as it was. But my spirits are vigorous and elastick. I dine in a different company almost every day, at least scarcely ever twice running in the same company, so that I have fresh accessions of ideas. I drink with Lord Lonsdale one day ; the next, I am quiet in Malone's elegant study, revising my *Life of Johnson*, of which I have high expectations both as to fame and profit. I surely have the art of writing agreeably. The Lord Chancellor<sup>1</sup> told me, 'he had read *every word* of my Hebridian journal ; he could not help it'. Adding 'could you give a rule how to write a book that a man *must* read ? I believe Longinus could not'.

Honest David dined with me yesterday. Your power of attorney is perfectly right. Dundas deserves to be hanged for his treacherous and unfeeling conduct to David. But David will stick to him. I am thinking to write *in my way* against the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts.<sup>2</sup> I have no patience with the impudent sectaries. You know I meet at Dilly's table many of those fellows who are very firebrands.<sup>3</sup>

My best compliments to Mrs. Temple and love to your children. My sons are getting well. I saw my little daughter at Chelsea today, very much improved. She is very pretty. She *really* is. Adieu, my oldest and most intimate friend.

Ever most affectionately yours,

James Boswell.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Thurlow.

<sup>2</sup> He did not do so. Fox had recently brought in a Bill for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. Burke opposed the Bill early in March, and it was defeated.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Dilly continued his brother Edward's hospitable prac-

tice of inviting to dinner men of all shades of political opinion. It was there that Johnson had twice met Wilkes and once Arthur Lee, the American patriot. Boswell addressed to Dilly an *Horatian Ode* (see *Gentleman's Magazine*, April and June 1791).

272. To the Right Reverend Thomas Percy<sup>1</sup>

My dear Lord, Queen Anne Street, West, 12 March 1790

I am indeed ashamed of my long silence. But, although I felt very gratefully the kindness of your Lordship's last obliging letter, containing some good information for my *Life of Dr. Johnson*, many things have since my receiving it made me rather an irregular correspondent. As the great cause of all my dissipation of mind, I have to mention the loss of a most valuable wife, who died in June last of a consumption, which, being an hereditary complaint, had afflicted her for many, many years. I have three daughters, the eldest of whom is only sixteen, and two sons, the eldest of whom is only fourteen. I have, therefore, a great charge, for which I am very unfit; but I must do my best. I was every day wishing to write to your Lordship, for that consolation which your office enables you to give. I thank God for having afforded me more than I at first supposed possible.

It gives me great pleasure to hear that your Lordship and family intend a visit to us next summer. I shall by that time be well advanced in my *magnum opus*, of which a hundred pages are now printed. I hope we shall have many of those happy days which *olim meminisse juvabit*.<sup>2</sup>

I engaged to Sir Joshua Reynolds to send your Lordship Mr. Burke's speech on the French affairs.<sup>3</sup> It accordingly comes under cover, as your Lordship mentioned. I have added to it Lord Stanhope's answer, which I will venture to call somewhat blackguard.

Sir Joshua has been shamefully used by a junto of the Academicians.<sup>4</sup> I live a great deal with him, and he is much better than you would suppose.

<sup>1</sup> From Nichols, *Illustrations*, vii. 312

<sup>2</sup> *Aeneid*, i 203.

<sup>3</sup> *Substance of the Speech of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke, in the Debate on the Army Estimates in the House of Commons, on Tuesday the 9th Day of February, 1790, comprehending a discussion of the present*

*situation of affairs in France*, London, 1790. The reply to this was *A Letter from Earl Stanhope to the Right Honourable Edmund Burke, containing a short answer to his late Speech on the French Revolution*, London, 1790.

<sup>4</sup> For an account of Sir Joshua's quarrel with a group of members in

Pray, how does your edition of Goldsmith go on?<sup>1</sup> I am in the way of getting at many additional works of his, which I shall communicate to your Lordship.

I offer my best compliments to Mrs Percy and the young ladies; and ever am your Lordship's faithful humble servant,  
James Boswell

### 273. To Bennet Langton<sup>2</sup>

My dear Sir,

London, 9 April 1790.

You cannot imagine how I was comforted by receiving your kind letter, as my *brooding* mind had begun to form strange groundless apprehensions that you were somehow offended with me. Let us *engage* that no such sad circumstance shall ever take place without fair warning given, and then we shall be at least *negatively* easy.

As a Steward of the Humane Society<sup>3</sup> I lately got acquainted with the Reverend Mr. Pott, Archdeacon of St. Albans, who preached an admirable sermon for our charity. He told me he had a living for some time in Lincolnshire, near to Langton,

the Royal Academy, who opposed the election of Joseph Bonomi to full membership, see Leslie and Taylor, *Life of Reynolds*, II. 553 ff. This letter of Boswell's was written during the period after Reynold's resignation from the presidency and from membership in the Academy and before his resumption of them, at the request of the members, on March 16

<sup>1</sup> See p. 394. Bishop Percy later (1801) furnished for the first collected edition of Goldsmith's works materials for an 'Account' of the poet's life, which is usually referred to as the 'Percy Memoir'.

<sup>2</sup> From the original in the British Museum. The letter is addressed. 'To Major Bennet Langton of the Royal North Lincolnshire Militia, Warley Camp, Essex.'

<sup>3</sup> The Humane Society (later, the

Royal Humane Society), instituted in 1774, 'for the Recovery of Persons apparently dead by Drowning,' and those suffering from any form of suspended animation. Boswell's friend, Dr John Coakley Lettsom, was treasurer of the Society, and had long been one of its most ardent supporters. It is probable that he was influential in having Boswell chosen as a steward. Sir Abraham Hume was also a steward. A list of stewards, as printed by the Society in 1789, does not include Boswell's name, so it is probable that his election had occurred in the twelve-month preceding the writing of this letter. The anniversary of the Society on March 30 was the occasion of a sermon and a large dinner. Cf. letter of 8 March 1791, below.

from

from which he regretted that you were absent. I found he knew *your character well*; he described Langton as a respectable ancient place, and said he passed it with a sigh.

You may rest assured that you shall see your Johnsoniana before I print them.<sup>1</sup> I shall either send them to you, or (what I really wish much) come to you for a day or two and have *chocolade*<sup>2</sup> for my mind. How can I lodge myself most comfortably?

We are now collecting our cash for Johnson's Monument. Pray give orders to pay your five guineas to Mr. Metcalfe, Saville Row, who is our cashier.

I have printed twenty sheets of my *Magnum Opus*. It will be the most entertaining book that ever appeared. Only think of what an offer I have for it—a *cool thousand*. But I am advised to retain the property myself

Now, my dear Langton, let me request to have your answer to my queries directly; for *one* of the articles will be in the press in a day or two. How *can* you be so indolent? With best wishes to Lady Rothes and love to your young race,

I am ever

Most affectionately yours,

James Boswell.

Write me under cover of Richard Penn, Esq., M.P., who calls you his old friend.

## 274. To the Right Reverend Thomas Percy<sup>3</sup>

My dear Lord,

London, 9 April 1790.

Stockdale<sup>4</sup> has promised a list of the members who voted on both sides on the great question of the Corporation and Test Acts. But he is so very long about it that I will wait no longer, but send you the debate as published by him. I most heartily rejoice to find that the Church is so respectably established in the opinion of the laity.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. letter of 16 December 1790, p. 410.

<sup>2</sup> *Sic.*

<sup>3</sup> From Nichols, *Illustrations*, vii.

<sup>4</sup> John Stockdale, the publisher, who issued the *Debates in Parliament*.

As to suppressing your Lordship's name when relating the very few anecdotes of Johnson with which you have favoured me, I will do anything to oblige your Lordship but that very thing.<sup>1</sup> I owe to the authenticity of my work, to its respectability, and to the credit of my illustrious friend,<sup>2</sup> to introduce as many names of eminent persons as I can. It is comparatively a very small portion which is sanctioned by that of your Lordship, and there is nothing even bordering on impropriety. Believe me, my Lord, you are not the only bishop in the number of great men with which my pages are graced. I am quite resolute as to this matter.

Pray, who is it that has the charge of Goldsmith's works here? I should like to talk with him. I know not where the plan of his encyclopaedia is, or if it be preserved.<sup>3</sup>

Our amiable friend, Sir Joshua Reynolds, has received from the Empress of Russia the present of a very fine gold snuff-box, beautifully enamelled, with her head on the lid, set round with five-and-thirty capital diamonds. Within it is a slip of paper,

<sup>1</sup> Percy never forgave Boswell for his frankness and his free use of names. To the editor of Sir James Stonehouse's correspondence he writes. 'If among his letters you should find any written to me, I hope you will not commit them to the press without allowing me to judge whether I think them fit for publication. . . . You may not perhaps have heard of the fate of the late Biographer of Johnson (Boswell), or what occasioned his death which soon followed that publication. In consequence of his violating the primary law of civil society in publishing a man's unreserved correspondence and unguarded conversation, he became so shunned and scouted that with every agreeable talent for lively converse, a fund of anecdotes, and a considerable elevation in society, he was so studiously excluded from all decent company that he was

driven into deplorable habits of drinking, which speedily terminated a life that seemed formed for long duration' (A C C Gaussen, *Percy, Poet and Prelate*, p 217). The careful reader of Boswell's correspondence need not be told that Percy's statement regarding the last years of his life is greatly exaggerated, but it indicates an attitude of mind that had become common among a certain class of the biographer's friends.

<sup>2</sup> Nichols reads *friends*, but the reference is plainly to Johnson.

<sup>3</sup> There was no literary executor. Percy himself supervised the publication of the first collected edition.

In 1773 Goldsmith had projected a *Dictionary of the Arts and Sciences*, and had drawn up a prospectus, which, however, was never published. The plan was dropped, and the prospectus disappeared.

on which are written in her own hand these words—I think I recollect them exactly—‘Pour le Chevalier Reynolds, en témoignage du contentement que j’ai ressenti de ses excellens discours sur la peinture’.<sup>1</sup>

I offer my best compliments to Mrs. Percy, and the young ladies; and have the honour to be, my dear Lord, your Lordship’s faithful, humble servant,

James Boswell.

### 275. To Isaac Reed:

Dear Sir,

Monday, 12 April (1790).

I shall not apologize for troubling you with this, to beg that you may favour me with the date of Moses Browne’s pieces<sup>3</sup> in which Dr. Johnson is mentioned, as also with a sight

<sup>1</sup> In 1788 Reynolds painted, by command of the Empress Catherine, a large picture called *The Infant Hercules*, for which he received fifteen hundred guineas. The snuff-box, which was ornamented with the empress’s monogram set in diamonds, was added as a personal tribute.

Reynolds’s *Discourses on Art* are his best-known literary work. There are fifteen discourses in all. The fourteenth, the celebrated account of Gainsborough, delivered in 1788 and published in the following year, may perhaps have been the volume sent to the empress; but it is more likely that the artist presented her with a collection of all the discourses thus far published.

<sup>2</sup> From a copy. The original is in the possession of Professor Robert Rogers. The recipient was the well-known Shakespearian, Isaac Reed (1742–1807), whom Boswell addressed at Staple Inn, where he had a particularly fine collection of books, mainly dramatic. Boswell calls him his ‘steady friend, . . . whose extensive and accurate knowledge of

literary history I do not express with exaggeration when I say that it is wonderful’ (*Life*, iv 37).

<sup>3</sup> Moses Browne (1704–87), the author of *Piscatory Eclogues*, *Sunday Thoughts*, and an *Essay on the Universe*. In 1750 he published a revision of Walton’s *Complete Angler*, the preface to which (pp. iv–v) contains the following reference to Johnson. ‘At the instigation of an ingenious and learned friend, whose judgment of men and books is sufficiently established by his own writings, in the opinion of the world, I undertook this employment.’ A footnote explains that this friend is ‘Mr. Samuel Johnson, who may probably on another occasion, oblige the Public with the *Life* of Mr. Walton’.

Johnson had seen Browne at a time when they were both in the employ of Cave (Hawkins, *Life of Johnson*, pp. 46, *note*, and 49). Johnson read Browne’s *Sunday Thoughts* ‘with cold approbation’, and said he had a great mind to publish *Monday Thoughts*. Browne is not mentioned by Boswell in the *Life*.

of the pieces themselves, as also with a chronological note of what you understand to be written by Johnson between 1757 and 1765 inclusive. My servant will call tomorrow before 12 for your answer.

Yours sincerely,  
Ja Boswell.

### 276. To Isaac Reed<sup>1</sup>

Dear Sir, (< 1790.)

I send you the book and shall be much obliged to you if you will make your remarks as soon as you conveniently can, and write them on a separate paper. I will call on you in a few days. Pray take care of the book. It happens that I have not one of my own to send. You will find several notes on it, by no mean hand.

Yours sincerely,  
James Boswell.

### 277. To the Reverend William Temple

My dear Temple, Carlisle, 21 June 1790.

At no period during our long friendship have I been more unhappy than at present. The day on which I was obliged to set out from London, I had an hour allowed me, after a most shocking conversation with Lord Lonsdale, and I hastened home in hopes of finding you;<sup>2</sup> but you were gone out. It was to inform you that upon his seeing me by no means in good-humour, he challenged it roughly and said, 'I suppose you thought I was to bring you into Parliament. I never had any such intention': in short, he expressed himself in the most

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the Adam Collection. The book which Boswell sent to Reed was probably a volume of Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, in which he desired to have Reed mark the passages in which he had given assistance to Johnson (*Life*, iv. 37). It seems strange that, although Bos-

well mentioned Reed several times in the *Life*, he nowhere made use of the information of which he was here in search. He praises the 'frankness' of Reed's 'communications'.

<sup>2</sup> Temple was visiting Boswell in London.

degrading manner, in presence of a low man from Carlisle and one of his menial servants. The miserable state of low spirits I had, as you too well know, laboured under for some time before, made me almost sink under such unexpected, insulting behaviour. He insisted rigorously on my having solicited the office of Recorder of Carlisle—and that I could not, without using him ill, resign it until the duties which were now required of it were fulfilled, and without a sufficient time being given for the election of a successor. Thus was I dragged away, as wretched as a convict; and in my fretfulness I used such expressions as irritated him almost to fury, so that he used such expressions towards me, that I should have, according to the irrational laws of honour, sanctioned by the world, been under the necessity of risking my life, had not an explanation taken place. This happened during the first stage. The rest of the journey was barely tolerable. We got to Lancaster on Saturday night, and there I left him to the turmoil of a desperate attempt in electioneering.<sup>1</sup> I proceeded to Carlisle last night, and today have been signing orders as to poors-rates. I am alone at an inn, in wretched spirits, and ashamed and sunk on account of the disappointment of hopes which led me to endure such grievances. I deserve all that I suffer. I may be kept hanging on for weeks, till the election and midsummer sessions are over; and I am at the same time distracted what to do in my own county as to the state of which I expect letters every day. I am quite in a fever. O! my old and most intimate friend! what a shocking state am I now reduced to. I intreat of you, if you possibly can, to afford me some consolation directed to me here, and pray do not divulge my mortification. I will endeavour to appear indifferent—and as I now resign my recordership, I shall gradually get rid of all communication with this brutal fellow. How much does it distress me to think that I should have had a return of dire hypochondria at the very time when you and your amiable daughter were with us, and then that I should have been compelled to leave you. As to making provision for your amusement from my friends, alas!

<sup>1</sup> A general election occurred in this year. Parliament had been dissolved 11 June.



the selfishness of London is too great. I look up to God for relief to my mind; and I have this *real consolation*, that we have met after a long absence the same friends as when we parted. My kindest compliments to Miss Temple.

Ever most affectionately yours,

James Boswell.

How unfortunate! to be obliged to leave my friend and interrupt my work! Never was a poor ambitious projector more mortified. I am suffering without any prospect of reward, and only from my own folly. I apprehend you will be set out before this reaches London. May God bless you and Mrs. Temple and your children.

As to my conduct and future views I take your admonition in good part, and shall profit by it in one way or other. But of this hereafter.

## 278. To the Mayor, Aldermen, Bailiffs, and Capital Citizens of Carlisle<sup>1</sup>

Gentlemen,

Carlisle, 28 June 1790.

Finding that other engagements prevent me from discharging the duty of Recorder of Carlisle, in the manner that it ought to be done, I take the liberty now to intimate to you my resignation, to take place as soon after the ensuing midsummer sessions, as I shall have a call to return to London.

I beg leave to express my very sincere thanks for your having been pleased to elect me into that office, of which I was proud to accept, and I shall be exceedingly happy if I can at any time be of the least service to the Corporation, for which I shall always retain a grateful regard.

I have the honour to be,

Gentlemen,

Your much obliged and  
faithful humble servant,

James Boswell.

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the Adam Collection.

## 279. To the Reverend William Temple

My dear Temple,

London, 21 July 1790.

I gratefully acknowledged the receipt of your kind and soothing letter directed to me at Carlisle, where I was detained in irksome captivity from Sunday, the 20 June, till Thursday, the 15 July, when I at length got free, and with my daughter Euphemia arrived here about noon on Saturday the 17th. Though my mind was very sick, I soon felt relief in London. I dined that day quietly with Malone. On Sunday I was at St. George's Church, Hanover Square, and dined again with Malone, having by mistake been too late for the villa of Mr. Devaynes' the Apothecary. On Monday I and my two daughters dined and past the day at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, where were Lord Eliot and his son John, Mr. Metcalfe, Mr. Malone, Mr. Jephson, and Mr. Devaynes. Variety of company had an insensible influence upon my mind; but whenever I was alone, my depression of spirits recurred. I have, however, dined yesterday and today at home with my daughters, and am tolerably well. On my return to town I found a serious cause of real anxiety, my dear little James having been ill of a fever for near a week, and being still under that alarming disorder. I thank God that this day Dr. Warren has declared that the fever is gone. I am in great concern what should be done with him; for he is so oppressed at Westminster School by the big boys, that I am almost affraid to send him thither again. But he must be at some school, and changes are disadvantageous.

Your letter of 7 July was lying for me here on my arrival. You may easily believe that I most sincerely sympathise with the uneasy feelings which you confess. What a state are we in!—dissatisfied with the present, and longing for some other situation and when we reach *that*, very often experiencing more uneasiness, nay imagining that what we wished to quit was better. Surely, my dear friend, there *must* be another world, in which such beings as we are will have our misery compensated. But is not this a state of probation? and if it is, how awful

<sup>1</sup> 'That ever-cheerful companion Majesty' (*Life*, iv. 273). He attended Mr. Devaynes, apothecary to his Majesty in his last illness.

is the consideration. I am struck with your question, '*Have you confidence to entreat the divine aid?*' In truth I am sensible that I do not sufficiently 'try my ways' as the Psalmist says, and am even almost inclined to think with you that my great Oracle, Johnson, *did* allow too much credit to good principles without good practice. What advice can I give you, my dear Temple, to be pleased with yourself, unless to beg that you may view yourself with my eyes; for instance when I think of your creditable situation in the Church, while my attempts in the law have been hitherto so unsuccessful, I wonder that you are not contented though I would not have you satisfied.—And considering your domestick disposition, your love of books and of rural scenes, you are upon the whole vastly well. But let us contribute all we can to each other's aid.

I did not go to Ayrshire, finding that I could only shew how small a party I had. I shall *keep up* a candidateship as giving consequence. I parted from the Northern Tyrant in a strange equivocal state, for he was half irritated, half reconciled. But I promise you I shall keep myself quite independent of him. Best compliments to you all.

Ever most affectly. yours,

J. B.

Veronica says she has not found any feathers left by Miss Temple. My work had not stopped during my absence. I shall now persevere in diligence, and though I am now in woeful *indifference*, I trust that before it is finished, a taste, a relish, shall return.

While in the north, I got such accounts of the lady of fortune,<sup>1</sup> whose *reputation* you heard something of, that I was quite determined to make no advances.

Whether I shall take any such step I doubt much. The loss I have experienced is perpetually recurring, and though there *might* be *comforts* in what you suggested, I fear there would be *troubles*.

<sup>1</sup> During his recent visit, Temple had apparently suggested that Boswell might find a way out of his

difficulties by marrying a lady of fortune

## 280. To the Reverend William Temple

My dear Temple, London, 15 September, 1790.

Your last letter is truly kind. I intended to have written you a long letter today, and for that purpose obtained from Lord Eliot the frank which covers this. But my old friend, Ross,<sup>1</sup> the player, died suddenly yesterday morning. I was sent for as his most particular friend in town, and have been so busy in arranging his funeral, at which I am to be chief mourner, that I have left myself very little time, only about ten minutes. Poor Ross. He was an unfortunate man in some respects. But he was a true *bon vivant*, a most social man, and never was without good eating and drinking, and hearty companions. He had school-fellows and friends, too, who stood by him wonderfully. I have discovered that Admiral Barrington<sup>2</sup> once sent him £100, and allowed him an annuity of £60 a year.

As to the important part of your letter, I should not hesitate a moment, judging from the account which you give me of the offer which Miss Temple has.<sup>3</sup> But I do not clearly understand of what family he is. I read, 'Duke of Breton'. Pray write the name fair, and be more full. Is the young gentleman a foreigner? But I would by no means refuse such an offer. She is indeed a charming girl, and was much admired here, even by the critick Malone.

God bless you, my dearest friend, in whom I have the consolation of unaltered affection, and ever am

Most sincerely yours,

J. B.

I shall *without fail* write again soon.

I have a letter today from honest David. He left London on Tuesday,  $\frac{1}{2}$  past twelve at noon, and got to Auchinleck on Friday.

<sup>1</sup> For Ross, see letter of 10 April 1774, p 199.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel Barrington (1729-1800), noted for his generosity and kindness.

<sup>3</sup> Temple's eldest daughter was Anne (born 7 July 1772). 'Shortly after her father's death, on November 29, 1796, she married the Rev. Charles Powlett, chaplain to the

Prince of Wales, and afterwards rector of Winsdale, Hants, whom she first met in 1790' (*Memoirs of Archbishop Temple*, p. 7). Powlett was the family name of the Dukes of Bolton (not *Breton*, as Boswell thought Temple had written the name), and it was of this family that Powlett was a connexion.

Dear

281. To Dr. <James> Lind<sup>1</sup>

London, 29 October 1790.

## 282. To George Steevens

Dear Sir,

Saturday, 30 October &lt;1790&gt;.

My having been in the country has prevented my acknowledging sooner the favour of your polite note.

The original *materials* of Irene Mr Langton had from Johnson,<sup>3</sup> and presented them with a fair copy made by himself to the King; but with his Majesty's permission kept a copy for himself, which he obligingly communicated to me, and I have given some extracts from it<sup>4</sup> I breakfast every day, almost, at home at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past nine. Pray come and *déjeunez* after your walk.

I am your most obed't humble serv't

James Boswell.

I go to Kent<sup>5</sup> today and return Monday or Tuesday.

<sup>1</sup> From the *Catalogue of the Morrison Collection of Autographs*, 1. 103 The recipient was probably James Lind (1736-1812), M D, of Edinburgh. The manuscript of this letter is described as '1 p quarto'.

Of this letter the *Catalogue* says 'Referring to his son's state of health, the writer expresses anxiety about the condition of his lungs'

<sup>2</sup> From the original in the Adam Collection The date is ascertained from the next letter The recipient was George Steevens (1736-1800), the eminent Shakespearian scholar, a member of the Literary Club, and Johnson's occasional assistant in writing the *Lives of the Poets* He edited and revised Johnson's Shakespeare, when it was republished in 1773.

<sup>3</sup> The reference is to the 'original

unformed sketch' for Irene, which Johnson, a few days before his death, presented to Langton 'The handwriting is very difficult to be read—The King, having graciously accepted of this manuscript as a literary curiosity, Mr Langton made a fair and distinct copy of it' (*Life*, 1. 108) It is now in the British Museum

<sup>4</sup> In the *Life* Although the book was not yet published, the earlier pages were already printed.

<sup>5</sup> He went to Cator's. Boswell says that Johnson 'found a cordial solace at that gentleman's <Cator's> seat at Beckenham in Kent, which is indeed one of the finest places at which I was ever a guest; and where I find more and more a hospitable welcome'. (*Life*, iv. 313.)

283. To Lord Hawkesbury<sup>1</sup>

My Lord, Queen Anne Street West, 1 November 1790.

I beg that your Lordship may not startle at what you will now read from a man who is personally, and perhaps altogether, unknown to your Lordship.

In the *Life of Dr. Johnson*, which I have had for some time in the press, after inserting a letter which he wrote in favour of Dr. Dodd to the Right Honourable Charles Jenkinson, now Lord Hawkesbury, there is the following paragraph.

'Of this letter I am sorry to say no notice whatever was taken, not even the common civility of acknowledging the receipt of it. We may wonder the more at this, that the noble Lord's own great advancement, it might have been thought, would have impressed him with just sentiments of the respect which is due to superiour abilities and attainments. I had prepared something pointed upon this topick, but my high esteem of Lord Hawkesbury's general character restrains me.'

In a conversation with Mr. Cator<sup>2</sup> of Beckenham, from whence I returned this morning, after passing two days with him, I had the pleasure of being assured that your Lordship did by no means undervalue my illustrious friend; and therefore I presume to give your Lordship this trouble, as you may perhaps enable me to explain a matter which has been much talked of, so as to obviate any unfavourable construction; which I sincerely wish to do; for, believe me, my Lord, my mind is to happily constituted, that instead of envying, I delight in contemplating a regular, well-founded, well-built prosperity.

I have only to add, that as it so happens that I am just come to that part of my work in which the letter from Johnson to your Lordship is introduced, I request that if I am to be favoured

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the Adam Collection. The recipient was Charles Jenkinson (1727-1808), first Earl of Liverpool. Johnson's letter to him was never received. Boswell says. 'I presumed to write to his Lordship, requesting an explanation. . . . His Lordship, in the very polite answer with which he was pleased imme-

diately to honour me, thus expresses himself — "I have always respected the memory of Dr. Johnson, and admire his writings, and I frequently read many parts of them with pleasure and great improvement." ' *Life*, III. 147.

<sup>2</sup> See the preceding letter, note 5.

with an answer, it may not be delayed. I shall wait for three<sup>1</sup> days.

I have the honour to be, with great respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

most obedient humble servant,

James Boswell.

## 284. To John Wilkes<sup>2</sup>

Thursday, 18 November <1790>.

Mr Boswell will, with great pleasure, obey the glad summons to Kensington Gore<sup>3</sup> on Sunday next, and is happy to understand, that *Mon Révérend Père Villette*<sup>4</sup> in the discharge of his duty is to be there to receive the *confession* of John Wilkes, as an *amende honorable* to the Scotch.

My dear Sir,

Courtenay told me this morning, when I asked him if he was to be with you, that you did not know where he was. I *do* know, and if you will enclose his card to me, I will deliver it, and *insure* him in time. But he says if you do not send soon, he will be engaged.

I am glad of every opportunity to assure you that I ever am very gratefully,

Yours most sincerely,

James Boswell.

Pray let us meet oftener.

*Eheu fugaces!*

*Nec pietas moram.*<sup>5</sup>—

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript altered from *two*

<sup>2</sup> From the original in the British Museum. The date 1790 is deduced from the fact that this is the only year during Boswell's residence or visits in London when November 18 fell on a Thursday.

<sup>3</sup> ' <Wilkes> sometimes withdrew to a small house in Kensington Gore, where he had another daughter <than Polly Wilkes> living with her mother. Here he built an aviary and culti-

vated an elegant little garden, and amused himself in the study of natural history.' Treloar, *Wilkes and the City*, p 215

<sup>4</sup> 'The Reverend Mr. Vilette, who has been Ordinary of Newgate for no less than eighteen years, in the course of which he has attended many hundreds of wretched criminals.' *Life*, iv. 329.

<sup>5</sup> Horace, *Odes*, iii. 14. 1.

My

## 285. To the Reverend William Temple

My dear Temple, London, 24 November 1790.

Instead of a long letter I write a scrap, and at the same time send another short one of an old date.<sup>1</sup> Pray do not let your daughter refuse so good a match. I am in great spirits, and shall upon my honour write fully this week.

I am ever most affectionately yours,  
J. B.

## 286. To Edmond Malone

My dear Malone, London, 4 December 1790.

Let me begin with myself On the day after your departure, that most friendly fellow Courtenay (begging the pardon of an M.P. for so free an epithet) called on me, and took my word and honour that, till the 1st of March, my allowance of wine *per diem* should not exceed four good glasses at dinner, and a pint after it: and this I have kept, though I have dined with Jack Wilkes; at the London Tavern, after the launch of an Indiaman; with dear Edwards; Dilly; at home with Courtenay; Dr. Barrow,<sup>2</sup> at the mess of the Coldstream; at the Club; at Warren Hastings's, at Hawkins,<sup>3</sup> the Cornish member's; and at home with a colonel of the Guards, &c. This *regulation* I assure you is of essential advantage in many respects. The *Magnum Opus* advances. I have revised p. 216.<sup>4</sup> The additions which I have received are a Spanish quotation from Mr. Cambridge; an account of Johnson at Warley Camp from Mr. Langton; and Johnson's letters to Mr. Hastings—three in all—one of them long and admirable;<sup>5</sup> but what sets the diamonds in pure gold of Ophir is a letter from Mr. Hastings to me, illustrating them and their writer. I had this day the honour of a long visit from the late Governor-General of India.

<sup>1</sup> Apparently the letter of 15 September, above

<sup>2</sup> The Master of the Academy in Soho Square, where James Boswell, junior, was a student.

<sup>3</sup> Sir Christopher Hawkins.

<sup>4</sup> Volume II.

<sup>5</sup> See *Life*, III. 251, 360; and IV. 66–8.



There is to be no more impeachment.<sup>1</sup> But you will see his character nobly vindicated. Depend upon this.

And now for my friend. The appearance of Malone's Shakespeare on the 29th November was not attended with any external noise; but I suppose no publication seized more speedily and surely on the attention of those for whose critical taste it was chiefly intended. I send by this post under cover of Mr Leas, fifteen newspaper paragraphs collected by Mr. Selfe;<sup>2</sup> who offers you his most attached respects. If I find any that escape him, I shall secure them for you. At the Club on Tuesday, where I met Sir Joshua, Dr Warren, Lord Ossory,<sup>3</sup> Lord Palmerston, Windham, and Burke in the chair,—Burke was so full of his anti-French Revolution rage, and poured it out so copiously, that we had almost nothing else. He, however, found time to praise the clearness and accuracy of your dramatick history; and Windham found fault with you for not taking the profits of so laborious a work. Sir Joshua is pleased, though he would gladly have seen more *disquisition*—you understand me! Mr. Daines Barrington is exceedingly gratified. He regrets that there should be a dryness between you and Steevens,<sup>4</sup> as you have treated him with great respect. I understand that in a short time, there will not be one of your books to be had for love or money.

I have called several times on John,<sup>5</sup> who hopes to set out next week; but I am not for his being in a hurry. Pray let me

<sup>1</sup> Boswell was mistaken, for Hastings was not acquitted till 1795. See letter of 24 April 1795, p. 466. At this moment it was thought that the whole affair might be dropped.

<sup>2</sup> Selfe appears to have been the 'counsellor' at the printing house and an assistant to Malone and Boswell. It was he who read the final revision of the proof-sheets of the *Life* before they were sent to the press.

<sup>3</sup> John Fitzpatrick (1745–1818), second Earl of Upper Ossory, his wife was one of Walpole's most active correspondents.

<sup>4</sup> 'In the edition of Shakespeare superintended by Isaac Reed, which appeared about this time (1785), Malone had inserted some notes which controverted a few by Steevens, and gave offence.' In the discussion which followed, Malone offered to submit to Steevens any notes in which he might have occasion to use material originating with Steevens, and to print Steevens's answers to them without reply. 'This very fair arrangement, with characteristic irritability, was declined.' Prior, *Life of Malone*, pp. 121, 122.

<sup>5</sup> Malone's servant.

hear from you, and command me most freely. I offer my best respects to the family—I should say the House—and compliments to Jephson.

I ever am

Most affectionately yours,

J. B.

### 287. To Edmond Malone

My dear Malone,

London 7 December 1790.

It is my intention to send a weekly packet every Saturday, while there is *stuff*, which I suppose there will be for some time. But this is a Gazette Extraordinary, of which you will not grudge the postage. I dined last Saturday at Sir Joshua's with Mr. Burke, his lady, son, and niece, Lord Palmerston, Windham, Dr. Lawrence,<sup>1</sup> Dr. Blagden,<sup>2</sup> Dr Burney, Sir Abraham Hume,<sup>3</sup> Sir William Scott.<sup>4</sup> I sat next to young Burke at dinner, who said to me, that you had paid his father a very fine compliment.<sup>5</sup> I mentioned Johnson, to *sound* if there was any objection. He made none. In the evening Burke told me he had read your *Henry VI.*, with all its accompaniment, and it was exceedingly well done. He left us for some time; I suppose on some of his cursed politicks; but he returned—I *at* him again, and heard from his lips what, believe me, I delighted to hear, and took care to write down soon after. 'I have read his history of the stage, which is a very capital piece of criticism and anti-quarianism. I shall now read all Shakspeare through, in a very different manner from what I have yet done, when I have got such a commentator.' Will not *this* do for you, my friend?

<sup>1</sup> 'The learned and worthy Dr Lawrence, whom Dr Johnson respected and loved as his physician and friend.' *Life*, ii 296, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> Dr, later Sir, Charles Blagden (1748-1820), whom Johnson called a 'delightful fellow'.

<sup>3</sup> Sir Abraham Hume (1749-1836), a patron of the arts.

<sup>4</sup> See the account of Scott in the notes to the letter of 9 August 1791, p. 437.

<sup>5</sup> Malone had rather gone out of his way to pay a compliment to Burke in the preface to his edition of Shakespeare (1790; vol. 1, p lxxviii), where he mentioned him by name as 'a great orator, philosopher, and statesman, now living, whose talents and virtues are an honour to human nature'. Burke is superior even to Johnson, otherwise 'the brightest ornament of the eighteenth century'.

Burke was admirable company all that day. He never once, I think, mentioned the French Revolution, and was easy with me, as in *days of old* I do upon my honour *admire* and *love* him. Would that he had never seen Lord Rockingham, but had ever 'walked in a perfect way'. I am assured by a noble courtier that George Rex has said, 'Whatever he may have said of me, I now entirely forgive him'.

The best answer to him is by George Rous,<sup>1</sup> the Counsel. It is honest, open, manly, able Whiggism. Courtenay is enraptured with it. But *Fack*<sup>2</sup> is absolutely an *enthusiast* in this French business.

I shall be indebted to you for half the postage of this; as I enclose a letter to the Bishop of Killaloe to send me the *Round Robin*,<sup>3</sup> and wish to be sure of a *certain* and *speedy* conveyance, and therefore trouble you.

As I was going to inquire for your servant John today, I met him in the street, and scolded him for being abroad in a cold, rainy day. He intended to have set out this week; but having contracted a fresh cold, and Dr. Warren having said to me that he should be in no haste, I have presumed to advise that he should delay his journey. You will send him your own orders. My daughters join me in best compliments. I have proposed General Burgoyne<sup>4</sup> for the Club having had a very excellent letter from him. I am very anxious for him.

Yours ever,

J. B.

<sup>1</sup> *A Letter to the Right Honourable Edmund Burke, by George Rous, Esq., in reply to his Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*, London (1790).

<sup>2</sup> Wilkes.

<sup>3</sup> The famous Round Robin on Goldsmith's epitaph, submitted to Johnson as a protest against a Latin inscription. Boswell used an engraving of it as an illustration in the second volume of the first edition of the *Life*. Most subsequent editions have reproductions of one kind or another.

Boswell obtained the paper, not from Dr. Barnard, Bishop of Killaloe, as he had expected to do, but from Sir William Forbes of Pitsligo. It was Dr. Barnard who drew up the first address to Johnson, which was rejected, despite its wit and humour, as treating the subject 'with too much levity'. Burke proposed a second form of address, which was adopted, Sir William Forbes acting as clerk. See *Life*, III. 82 ff.

<sup>4</sup> General John Burgoyne (1722-92), whose aspirations were now

My

## 288. To Edmond Malone

My dear Malone,

London, 16 December 1790.

You will, I hope, have received my letter, with one parcel of paragraphs,<sup>1</sup> one only of which was mine, as you would see by our stipulated mark \*. I now send you by John a second parcel, not one of which is mine. Your *character* is written by a person whom I guessed, from his having said to me almost the very words of the concluding part, in the street—in short, a schoolfellow.<sup>2</sup>

Courtenay read to me your letter, which is truly affecting.

—whence comfort seem'd to flow

Discomfort swell'd.<sup>3</sup>

I would fain hope that your friend has recovered. I dined on Saturday in company with your apothecary, Mr. Atkinson, whom I found to be most conversable from his having known Lord Tyrawley<sup>4</sup> and I know not how many great men. He said the best thing for Mr. Jephson would be a saline draught put into a state of effervescence; but that before his advice could reach you, it would be unnecessary—one way or other.

I was sadly mortified at the Club on Tuesday, where I was in the chair, and on opening the box found three balls against

literary In 1787 Horace Walpole declared that Burgoyne's play, *The Heiress*, was 'the best modern comedy' (*Letters of Walpole*, xiv. 3). Burgoyne was never elected to the Literary Club. Many people in England had never been able to forget his surrender to the Americans at Saratoga, as a result of which the King had declined to receive him at Court. Moreover, his private life was not at this time above reproach.

<sup>1</sup> Notices and criticisms of Malone's Shakespeare, clipped from newspapers and magazines.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Lansdowne and Lord Sheffield were among Malone's schoolfellows in Dublin.

<sup>3</sup> *Macbeth*, i. ii. 28. The 'discomfort' referred to arose from the illness of the Rev William Jephson, son of Robert Jephson, the dramatist, Malone's lifelong friend and companion.

<sup>4</sup> James O'Hara (1690-1773), second Baron Tyrawley, a prominent diplomat in the preceding reign, for whom see the early volumes of Walpole's *Letters*. 'My Lord Tyrawley is come from Portugal, and has brought three wives and fourteen children; one of the former is a Portuguese, with long black hair platted down to the bottom of her back' (i. 308).

General

General Burgoyne. Present besides *moi*, Lord Ossory, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir Joseph Banks, Dr. Fordyce, Dr. Burney, young Burke, Courtenay, Steevens. One of the balls, I do believe, was put into the *no* side by Fordyce by mistake. You may guess who put in the other two.<sup>1</sup> The Bishop of Carlisle<sup>2</sup> and Dr. Blagden are put up. I doubt if the latter will be admitted, till Burgoyne gets in first.

Steevens owned that your labour on Shakspeare exceeded that of the whole phalanx. But he made no secret of his intending in his next edition of *Johnson and Steevens's Shakspeare* (for of that title he boasts) to assume all your prolegomena and all your notes which he likes, and that he will put yours *last* where *others* have preceeded you.<sup>3</sup> Also that he will exalt Monck Mason,<sup>4</sup> and give due praise to Ritson.

My work has met with a delay for a little while—not a whole day, however—by an unaccountable neglect in having paper enough in readiness. I have now before me p. 256. My utmost wish is to come forth on Shrove Tuesday (8 March). 'Wits are game cocks &c.'

I shall probably trouble you with a packet towards the conclusion. I am affraid of having too much copy.

Langton is in town, and dines with me tomorrow quietly, and revises his *collectanea*.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the manuscript Boswell has distinguished the names of Banks and Steevens by placing a cross (+) above them.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Douglas, who, according to Croker, was elected in 1792. Blagden was elected two years later.

<sup>3</sup> In the fourth edition of Johnson and Steevens's *Shakspeare*, published in 1793, there are two volumes of 'Prolegomena', in which the editor adopts many features from Malone's edition, including his preface and his essay on the English drama.

<sup>4</sup> John Monck Mason (1726-1809), author of *Comments on the last Edition of Shakspeare's Plays*, 1785. Joseph

Ritson, the well-known antiquary, was the author of *Remarks Critical and Illustrative on the Text and Notes of the last Edition of Shakspeare*. He was no friend to Steevens.

<sup>5</sup> 'I found in conversation with <Langton> that a good store of *Johnsoniana* was treasured in his mind, and I compared it to Herkulaneum or some old Roman field, which when dug, rewards the labour employed. The authenticity of every article is unquestionable. For the expression, I, who wrote them down in his presence, am partly answerable' (*Life*, iv 1-2). Cf. letter of 9 April 1790, above.

I beg

I beg to have my best compliments presented to Lord and Lady Sunderlin<sup>1</sup> and your valuable sisters, and ever am

My dear Sir,

Your much obliged and affectionate friend,

James Boswell.

### 289. To Dr. John Coakley Lettsom<sup>2</sup>

Dear Sir, Queen Anne Street, West, 25 December 1790.

Thomas Stodhart, son of my smith at Auchinleck, having worked eight years as a journeyman at Hackney with great diligence and sobriety, has taken a shop at Camberwell in order to carry on business for himself; and as I know him to be very deserving and remarkably kind to his old father, I earnestly recommend him to your patronage. I am with sincere regard,

Dear Sir,

Your faithful

humble servant,

James Boswell.

### 290. To the Reverend Dr. Samuel Parr

Reverend Sir, London, 10 January 1791.

Having occasion in my *Life of Dr. Johnson* to thank the editor of *Tracts by Warburton and a Warburtonian*, I request to hear by return of post, if I may say or guess that Dr. Parr is he. I should think that I may have liberty to do my friend

<sup>1</sup> Richard Malone (1738-1816), Baron Sunderlin of Lake Sunderlin, brother of Edmond, who predeceased him.

<sup>2</sup> From the original in the possession of E. B. Hackett. For the recipient, the well-known Quaker physician, see Thomas Joseph Pettigrew, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the late John Coakley Lettsom*, three vols., London, 1817.

Cf. Appendix I., letters of 6 Novem-

ber 1790, and 6 August 1792

<sup>3</sup> From the *Works of Samuel Parr* (1828), viii. 12. For Parr's attack upon Bishop Hurd, see letter of 16 February 1789, above. The compliment to Johnson is printed in full in *Life*, iv. 47, note 2, but Parr's name is not mentioned. It seems clear, therefore, that the permission here requested was not given. Boswell, however, printed an ardent defence of the anonymous author.

the credit of naming the person who has given him just and eloquent praise. I am, Reverend Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

James Boswell.

### 291. To Edmond Malone

My dear Malone, London, 18 January 1791.

You will have seen from *The Gentleman's Magazine* that I got your commission as to Dr. Jephson's *obituary* executed, though your letter did not reach me till the 29 December.<sup>1</sup> Pray who is the Sir Alexander Murray<sup>2</sup> who attended his funeral? The bankers on whom your bill was drawn were not at home when I called, so I could not get it discounted by them; but my Spanish brother did it very readily, and with his compliments begged you might be informed that he was glad he could accomodate you, and that he would be happy to receive your farther commands. On the 1st current, I paid the next £50 which my brother gave me, according to your direction, and have the receipt ready to be sent, or kept till your return, as you chuse. The papers had inserted Dr. Jephson's death before your letter came

I have read your *Shakspeare, Ford, and Jonson*<sup>3</sup> with as much attention and as much admiration of your research, accuracy, and clearness of arrangement and expression as you could wish. But I hesitate to introduce it into view in the newspapers, till

<sup>1</sup> See the *Gentleman's Magazine* for December 1790 (p. 1152), where the death of the Rev William Jephson, D.D., rector of Ray and Kilbritton, is announced as having occurred at Baronston, 'the seat of the Rt Hon. Lord Sunderlin'.

<sup>2</sup> In the *Gentleman's Magazine* he is referred to as Alexander Murray, Esq., and not as Sir Alexander. Boswell's attention had, presumably, been caught by the Scots name.

<sup>3</sup> A dissertation prefixed to Malone's edition of *Shakspeare*, 1. 387-414. It is a scholarly answer to

an assertion made, nearly half a century before, by the comedian, Charles Macklin, that he had read a pamphlet entitled, *Old Ben's Light Heart made heavy by Young John's Melancholy Lover*, from which he professed to give certain extracts in the *General Advertiser* in April 1748. Malone contended that the whole affair was a fabrication of Macklin's, and ended his argument with the assertion that the 'most plausible and best fabricated tale, if properly examined, will crumble to pieces'.

I hear from you ; for, to tell you the truth, I cannot help dissenting from you as to my old friend Macklin's having been the inventor of the statement which you have refuted with complete, nay, almost superfluous, success—I mean with a superfluity of proof and argument. I waited till I should hear others upon it, and started it at the Club. Dr. Warren, who I found to my surprise was master of it, said just what I had thought, that you had been too hard on Macklin, and that your dissertation would have been equally perfect without arraigning his veracity, but only shewing that the pamphlet which he quoted was grossly erroneous ; for you will observe that all its error, though fatal to its credit, does by no means shew that it was a recent invention, for all of it might have been the effect of ignorance or falsification at the time when the pamphlet is said to have been written. Mr. Steevens agreed with Dr. Warren, and told us that the pamphlet's not having been yet recovered by you did not prove that it did not exist, or had not existed ; for more than one which had been supposed fictions had been recovered, and he added that he had never seen your advertisement. Thinking as I do, I was afraid to write upon the subject in any way, lest I should either oppose you, or seem to agree in the charge of falsehood against poor Charles, who unquestionably could not *himself* be the authour of the statement for which more reading than he has, nor of the verses for which more genius than he has, is requisite. I will wait your answer, and one way or other shall have your dissertation drawn into particular view, as it shews what a lawyer and judge you might be if you would.

I have been so disturbed by sad money-matters, that my mind has been quite fretful. £500 which I borrowed and lent to a first cousin,<sup>1</sup> an unlucky captain of an Indiaman, were due on the 15th to a merchant in the city. I could not possibly raise that sum, and was apprehensive of being hardly used.

<sup>1</sup> Captain Bruce Boswell, son of John Boswell, brother of Lord Auchinleck, who early entered the service of the East Indian Company. My friend, Dr. J. T. T. Brown, informs me that in the probate of James

Boswell's will, Captain Bruce Boswell is mentioned as a debtor to the extent of £684 16s. 8d Cf Rogers *Boswelliana*, pp. 187–88

See Appendix I, letter of 12 November 1788.

He,



He, however, indulged me with an allowance to make partial payments; £150 in two months, £150 in eight months, and the remainder, with the interests, in eighteen months. How I am to manage I am at a loss, and I know you cannot help me. So this, upon my honour, is no hint. I am really tempted to accept of the £1000 for my *Life of Johnson*. Yet it would go to my heart to sell it at a price which I think much too low. Let me struggle and hope. I cannot be out on *Shrove Tuesday*, as I flattered myself. P. 376 of Vol. II. is ordered for press, and I expect another proof tonight. But I have yet near 200 pages of copy besides letters, and *the death*, which is not yet written. My second volume will, I see, be forty or fifty pages more than my first. Your absence is a woeful want in all respects. You will, I dare say, perceive a difference in the part which is revised only by myself, and in which many *insertions* will appear.<sup>1</sup>

My spirits are at present bad; but I will mention all I can recollect. Did I inform you that Dr. Blagden was blackballed, and that the Bishop of Carlisle shared the same fate the same day, I suppose to keep the other in countenance? Before the ballot there was a question whether your proposal for two blackballs which had *eight* for it and *two* against was now a law. Sir Joshua alone was *for* it, against *eight* of us. He then moved to have it considered by the Club at large and inserted in the cards, which was seconded by Dr. Fordyce and settled accordingly; but on Tuesday last, neither mover nor seconder being present, no notice was taken of it. We had last Club, Banks, Steevens, Warren, Windham, Burney, Dr. Warton, and Langton who has been here several weeks at the Queen's Head in Holborn. Warton and he and Seward are to dine with me next Saturday at my new house, to which I remove tomorrow, having taken this for another quarter that the other might be seasoned.

I had almost omitted to acquaint you that Humfrey and Man of Harp Lane have applied to me twice on *your* account for £17. 19. 2 of charges on the Madeira, which is a *joint* concern. I said I should write to you. How shall it be managed? Poor C.<sup>2</sup> has been at Bath for some time. I had a few lines from him

<sup>1</sup> That is, letters and accounts of Johnson derived from others.

<sup>2</sup> Courtenay.

a day or two ago. His situation is deplorable. I would fain have the seat in Parliament turned to account, and I found him not averse; but that must be negotiated, if at all, by others. Sir Joshua has been out of town a long time—I *really* think more than three weeks—at Burke's and Lord Ossory's. He returned on Sunday; but I have not yet seen him. I have his card for dinner on Thursday. I am to dine with Erskine<sup>1</sup> on Friday. For a wonder, he called on me, and then sent his invitation. Jo. Warton is to be there; but he declares that he did not suggest me.

Have I mentioned to you that Steevens told us at the Club he should take you *all* in—History of the Stage &c. (which my eldest son pleased me by saying, 'this is *very* entertaining') and that he is to exalt Ritson and advance Monck Mason? He has not yet begun. I have scarcely left room to offer my best compliments to Lord and Lady Sunderlin and your sisters. Ever gratefully and affectionately yours,

James Boswell.

## 292. To Edmond Malone

My dear Malone,

London, 29 January 1791.

You will find this a most desponding and disagreeable letter, for which I ask your pardon. But your vigour of mind and warmth of heart make your friendship of such consequence that it is drawn upon like a bank. I have for some weeks had the most woeful return of melancholy, insomuch that I have not only had no relish of any thing, but a continual uneasiness, and all the prospect before me for the rest of life has seemed gloomy and hopeless. The state of my affairs is exceedingly embarrassed. I mentioned to you that the £500 which I borrowed several years ago, and lent to a first cousin, an unfortunate India captain, must now be paid; £150 on the 18 of March, £150 on the 18 of October, and £257 15s. 6d. on the 18 of July 1792. This debt presses upon my mind, and it is uncertain if I shall ever get a shilling of it again. The clear money on which

<sup>1</sup> Presumably Thomas Erskine, K.C. (1750–1823). Cf. *Life*, II. 173 and letter of 29 January, below.

I can reckon out of my estate is scarcely £900 a year. What *can* I do? My grave brother urges me to quit London, and live at my seat in the country; where he thinks that I might be able to save so as gradually to relieve myself. But, alas! I should be *absolutely* miserable. In the mean time, such are my projects and sanguine expectations, that you know I purchased an estate which was given long ago to a younger son of our family, and came to be sold last autumn, and paid for it £2500—£1500 of which I borrow upon itself by a mortgage. But the remaining £1000 I cannot conceive a possibility of raising, but by the mode of annuity; which is, I believe, a very heavy disadvantage. I own it was improvident of me to make a clear purchase at a time I was sadly straitened; but if I had missed the opportunity, it never again would have occurred, and I should have been vexed to see an ancient appanage, a piece of, as it were, the flesh and blood of the family, in the hands of a stranger. And now that I have made the purchase, I should feel myself quite despicable should I give it up.

In this situation, then, my dear Sir, would it not be wise in me to accept of 1000 guineas for my *Life of Johnson*, supposing the person who made the offer should now stand to it, which I fear may not be the case; for two volumes may be considered as a disadvantageous circumstance? Could I indeed raise £1000 upon the credit of the work, I should incline to *game*, as Sir Joshua says; because it *may* produce double the money, though Steevens *kindly* tells me that I have over-printed, and that the curiosity about Johnson is *now* only in our own circle. Pray decide for me; and if, as I suppose, you are for my taking the offer, inform me with whom I am to treat. In my present state of spirits, I am all timidity. Your absence has been a severe stroke to me. I am at present quite at a loss what to do. Last week they gave me six sheets. I have now before me in *proof* p. 456. Yet I have above 100 pages of my copy remaining, besides his *Death*, which is yet to be written, and many insertions, were there room, as also seven-and-thirty letters, exclusive of twenty to Dr. Brocklesby,<sup>1</sup> most of which will furnish only

<sup>1</sup> For extracts from these, see *Life*, iv. 353-9.

extracts. I am advised to extract several of those to others, and leave out some; for my first volume makes only 516 pages, and to have 600 in the second will seem awkward, besides increasing the expense considerably. The *counsellor*, indeed, has devised an ingenious way to thicken the first volume, by *prefixing* the index.<sup>1</sup> I have now desired to have but one compositor. Indeed, I go sluggishly and comfortlessly about my work. As I pass your door I cast many a longing look.

I am to cancel a leaf of the first volume, having found that though Sir Joshua certainly assured me he had no objection to my mentioning that Johnson wrote a dedication for him, he now thinks otherwise.<sup>2</sup> In that leaf occurs the mention of Johnson having written to Dr. Leland, thanking the University of Dublin for their diploma. What shall I say as to it? I have

<sup>1</sup> The first volume was, of course, already printed off, but not bound up. By the rather awkward device of prefixing an index, called *An Alphabetical Table of Contents to both Volumes*, two sheets or sixteen (unnumbered) pages were added to the first volume and included between the *Advertisement* (or preface) and the body of the text. Thus the complete number of pages in volume I was brought up to 544, i. e. xii + 16 unnumbered + 516. Volume II contains 583 pages, with no prefatory matter except the title-page. The counsellor at the press was doubtless Mr. Selfe, for whom see letter of 4 December 1790.

<sup>2</sup> Page 272. The cancel, which survives in the proof-sheets preserved in Mr. Adam's collection, began with the fourth line from the foot of the page, and included the first nine lines on p. 273. The passage originally contained, beside the reference to the dedication furnished to Reynolds, a statement that Johnson was the author of the dedication in Percy's first edition of the *Reliques*. The mention of Dr. Leland was

retained in its original place. The text before the cancel read as follows.

'He furnished his friend, Dr. Percy, now Bishop of Dromore, with a Dedication to the Countess of Northumberland, which was prefixed to his collection of "Reliques of ancient English Poetry", in which he compliments that illustrious family in the most courtly style. It should not be wondered at, that one who can himself write so well as Dr. Percy should accept of a Dedication from Johnson's pen; for as Sir Joshua Reynolds, who we shall afterwards see accepted of the same kind of assistance, well observed to me, "Writing a dedication is a knack. It is like writing an advertisement." In this art no man excelled Dr. Johnson. Though the loftiness of his mind prevented him from ever dedicating in his own person, he wrote a very great number of Dedications for others. After all the diligence I have bestowed, some of them have escaped my inquiries. He told me "he believed he had dedicated to all the Royal Family round".'

also

also room to state shortly the anecdote of the college cook,<sup>1</sup> which I beg you may get for me. I shall be very anxious till I hear from you.

Having harassed you with so much about myself, I have left no room for any thing else. We had a numerous club on Tuesday: Fox in the chair, quoting Homer and Fielding &c, to the astonishment of Jo. Warton; who, with Langton and Seward, eat a plain bit with me, in my new house,<sup>2</sup> last Saturday. Sir Joshua has put up Dr. Lawrence, who will be blackballed as sure as he exists.

Pray give me some particulars of your Irish life. Present my best respects to Lord Sunderlin and the ladies and believe me to be ever affectionately yours,

J. B.

We dined on Wednesday at Sir Joshua's—13 *without* Miss P<sup>3</sup> Himself, Blagden, Batt,<sup>4</sup> Erskine, Langton, Dr. Warton, Metcalfe,<sup>5</sup> Dr. Lawrence, his brother, a clergyman, Sir Charles Bunbury,<sup>6</sup> myself.

Your cook has left at my house for you four penny post letters, and two sealed notes. I know none of the hands. What shall I do with them?

We all think that Palmeria will be Mrs Blagden.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hill first explained (*Johnsonian Miscellanies*, II 30) that the reference here was to an employee of Trinity College, Dublin, 'who had a mind to breed his son a scholar,' and wrote to Johnson for advice.

<sup>2</sup> 47, Great Portland Street.

<sup>3</sup> Only twelve are enumerated, however.

<sup>4</sup> John Thomas Batt, of Newhall.

<sup>5</sup> Lady Thomond told Farington that 'Sir Joshua Reynolds proposed Metcalfe to be a member of the Literary Club, at which Boswell expressed much dislike. One blackball excludes, and Metcalfe was blackballed'. Lady Thomond was convinced that it was Boswell who

blackballed him; this, however, Metcalfe did not know. Lady Thomond added that 'Sir Joshua liked the company of Boswell, but he was disposed to stay late', so that she was often 'obliged to force him away'. *Farington Diary*, 28 September 1806.

<sup>6</sup> Sir Thomas Charles Bunbury, Bart, a member of the Literary Club, brother of H. W. Bunbury, the caricaturist; see Walpole's *Letters*, *passim*.

<sup>7</sup> 'Palmeria' was Sir Joshua's niece, Mary Palmer, who married Lord Inchiquin in July of the following year. In 1800 her husband was created Marquis of Thomond.

## 293. To the Reverend William Temple

My dear Temple,

London, 7 February 1791.

Before this time you have been informed of my having had a most miserable return of bad spirits. Not only have I had a total distaste of life, but have been perpetually gnawed by a kind of mental fever. It is really shocking that human nature is liable to such inexplicable distress. O my friend! what can I do? In your last I find that you are afflicted with discontent and disapprobation of yourself, you who are so learned, so elegant, so good a man in all the relations of life. Your observation in a former letter as to time being measured not only by days and years but by our advancement in life is new and striking and is brought home to us both, especially to me, who have obtained no advancement whatever. But let me not harrass you with my complaints, but proceed to what concerns you and yours.

Miss Palmer, who has, I really believe, a sincere regard for you, applied to Lord Eliot, but all in vain.<sup>1</sup> I believe I mentioned to you having been told that several of the young men appointed by Lord Chatham had not served their time, and therefore were to be struck off; so that I hoped this might afford an opening. But what are we to do, when variety of interests draw so strong? I met Jerminham last night at Lord Lucan's, and complimented him on his new poem,<sup>2</sup> of which I have read a part.

<sup>1</sup> That is, in behalf of Temple's sailor son, Francis. Temple wrote to Jerminham, 29 November 1790: 'So Mr. Pitt has triumphed at last, and we are to have no war! This will disappoint the Navy people, &c. We have a son there, about whom my wife is naturally very anxious. He was three years at the Royal Academy at Portsmouth, three years in the *Thisbe* at Nova Scotia, and is just returned in the *Salisbury* from Newfoundland. It seems a pretty general promotion of midshipmen is to take place. Could you do us the favour to mention our son Francis to some of your friends; that we may have the satisfaction of seeing

him a Lieutenant? Promotion in the Navy is hardly attainable in time of peace, and, if he miss the present opportunity, there is little probability that another may present itself, at least in our time. Having solicited several of our friends, Lady Lisburne, Mr Dundas, etc., etc., my wife also reckoned on your good wishes.' Bettany, *Edward Jerminham*, pp 317-18.

<sup>2</sup> It is difficult to say whether the reference is to *Lines on a Late Resignation at the Royal Academy* (1790) or *The Shakespeare Gallery* (1791). Temple wrote to Jerminham in praise of the former poem, 25 March 1790. Bettany, pp 314-15.

I spoke

I spoke to him about your son; but though, I believe, well-inclined, he did not seem to think he could do much. I protest I hope most from Dundas. If you will allow me, I will try him in my way, requesting he may do a kindness of much consequence to an old friend, unconnected with politicks—and *let me have it to tell*. You should certainly write to him again, either for a vacancy now, or for the Newfoundland Station afterwards. It was a mistake to suppose that Hawkins would write to Mr Pitt. He never said he would, and he assures me he would not, were his own brother in the case. It is agreeable to think that your son is a fine, manly fellow, and does not seem to be discouraged, though his promotion should be delayed. What a world is this!—Here again I check myself, and go on.

Your daughter is indeed a most valuable young woman, and we cannot be too anxious as to her settlement in life. I understood from your son that Mr. Powlett's attachment to her is very strong. This is a very favourable circumstance, and much to his credit. I should wish to see him. The objections which Mrs. Temple suggests, are exceedingly sensible, but if the character of the gentleman be steady, I should not fear the effects of his being in the high company you mention. At the same time, I think it essential that he should have a reasonable income upon some *certainly*. If either in one way or another that is *secured*, I am clear that the match should take place. Hawkins has been very attentive to me this winter, and we must take him as he is.<sup>1</sup>

May God bless you and yours, my ever dear friend, prays  
your most affectionate

James Boswell.

#### 294. To Edmond Malone

My dear Malone,

London, 10 February 1791.

Yours of the 5th reached me yesterday. I instantly went to the Don, who purchased for you, at the office of Hazard

<sup>1</sup> That is, they must overlook his discourtesy to Boswell in his Hawkins's unwillingness to serve biography of Dr. Johnson; see letter Temple by approaching Pitt, and of 5 March 1789, above.

and

and Co., a half, stamped by Government, and warranted undrawn, of No. 43m152 in the English State Lottery. I have marked on the back of it Edmond, Henrietta, and Catharine Malone, and if Fortune will not favour those three united, I shall blame her. This half shall lye in my bureau with my own whole one, till you desire it to be placed elsewhere. The cost with registration is £8. 12. 6. A half is always proportionally dearer than a whole. I bought my ticket at Nicholson's the day before, and paid £16. 8. for it; I did not look at the number, but sealed it up. In the evening a handbill was circulated by Nicholson, that a ticket, the day before sold at his office for £16. 8., was drawn a prize of £5000. The number was mentioned in the handbill. I had resolved not to *know* what mine was, till after the drawing of the lottery was finished, that I might not receive a *sudden* shock of blank. But this unexpected circumstance, which elated me by calculating that mine must certainly be one of 100, or at most 200, sold by Nicholson the day before, made me look at the two *last figures* of it, which, alas, were 48, whereas those of the fortunate one were 33. I have remanded my ticket to its secresy. O, could I but get a few thousands, what a difference would it make upon my state of mind, which is harrassed by thinking of my debts. I am anxious to hear your determination as to my *Magnum Opus*. I am very very unwilling to part with the property of it, and certainly would not if I could but <sup>1</sup> credit for £1000 for three or four years. Could you not assist me in that way, on the security of the book and of an assignment to one half of my rents, £700, which, upon my honour, are always due, and would be forthcoming, in case of my decease. I *will* not sell till I have your answer as to this.

On Tuesday we had a Club of eleven Lords Lucan (in the chair), Ossory, Macartney,<sup>2</sup> Eliot, Bishop of Clonfert,<sup>3</sup> young Burke, myself, Courtenay, Windham, Sir Joshua, and Charles Fox, who takes to us exceedingly, and asked to have dinner a little later; so it is now to be at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past five. Burke had made

<sup>1</sup> *Sic.*

<sup>2</sup> George Macartney (1737-1806), first Baron Macartney of Lissanoure, who was Ambassador to St. Peters-

burg (1764-8), and later to China (1792-4). He was created Earl in 1794.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Richard Marlay.



great interest for his Drum-Major,<sup>1</sup> and, would you believe it? had not Courtenay and I been there, he would have been chosen. Banks was quite indignant; but had company at home. Lord Ossory ventured to put up the Bishop of Peterborough,<sup>2</sup> and I really hope he will get in. Courtenay and I will not be there, and probably not again till you come. It was poor work last day, the *Whelp*<sup>3</sup> would not let us hear Fox

I have been with Arnold again, who called his wife to declare that she herself had, the first day of month before last, put both *Month. Rev* and *Gent Mag* into the post-office. She was told that, as they were directed to the General Post Office, Dublin, there was no occasion to put a penny with each, as is done with newspapers for Ireland. Whether the *want* of that has occasioned their being stopped, I know not. He is to enquire more and let me know. Perry, the former editor of the *Gazeteer*, has now the whole of the *Morning Chronicle* as he told me. The first gleam of spirits I have, I shall animadvert on your erroneous *history* in the P. A. I am strangely ill, and doubt if even you could dispel the demonic influence.

I have now before me p. 488 in print, the 923 page of the copy only is exhausted, and there remain 80, besides the Death, as to which I shall be concise though solemn—also many letters.

Pray how shall I wind up? Shall I give the Character in my *Tour* somewhat enlarged?

I must have a cancelled leaf in Vol. II. of that passage where there is a conversation as to conjugal infidelity on the husband's side, and his wife saying she did not care how many women he went to, if he *loved* her alone; with my proposing to mark in a pocket book every time a wife *refuses*, &c. &c. I wonder how you and I admitted this to the publick eye, for Windam &c. were struck with its *indelicacy*, and it might hurt the book much. It is, however, mighty good stuff. No room for compliments. Ever most warmly yours,

J. B.

<sup>1</sup> The reference is probably to Dr. French Laurence, who is referred to in the preceding letter to Malone (29 January, above), as put up for membership in the Club, but sure to be blackballed

<sup>2</sup> Dr John Hinchcliffe, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge. He was elected before the appearance of the second edition of the *Life*, in which he is listed as a member. Cf p. 425.

<sup>3</sup> Young Burke, presumably.

My

## 295. To Edmond Malone

My dear Malone,

London, 25 February 1791.

I have been day after day anxiously waiting for a letter from you, for you must have received one from me since yours enclosing the bill, which I have discounted and with the contents paid your and Courtenay's shares of the duty on the Madeira, at the same time with my own, and applied the remainder to your half lottery ticket, on which, N.B., you are some shillings in my debt.

I have not seen Sir Joshua, I think, for a fortnight. I have been worse than you can possibly imagine, or I hope ever shall be able to imagine, which no man can do without experiencing the malady. It has been for some time painful to me to be in company. I, however, am a little better, and to meet Sir Joshua today at dinner at Mr Dance's,<sup>1</sup> and shall tell him that he is to have good Irish claret. My brother is to get me accurate information whether the Bishop of Clonfert's wine may be sent to our *Maitre d'hôtel*, as you call Thomas, and I shall acquaint you. By the way, Mr. Dundas has strictly kept his word to me, and given him the first vacant place in his Navy Office. It is not quite £100 a year; but the profit is *something* to so attentive a man, and though he is obliged to attend four or five hours every day, he has his time to manage his own business as formerly; and I have no doubt that his attention and accuracy will recommend him so as that he shall obtain much better promotion.

I am in a distressing perplexity how to decide as to the property of my book. You must know that I am *certainly* informed that a certain person who delights in mischief<sup>2</sup> has been *depreciating* it, so that I fear the sale of it may be very dubious. *Two quartos* and *two guineas* sound in an alarming manner. I believe, in my present frame, I should accept even of £500; for I suspect that were I now to talk to Robinson, I should find

<sup>1</sup> George Dance (1741-1825), R.A., now chiefly remembered for his excellent portraits in black chalk of his friends and contemporaries. His

portrait of Boswell is dated 'April 28th, 1793'. Cf. the *Farington Diary* for 7 November 1793.

<sup>2</sup> Steevens

him not disposed to give £1000. Did he absolutely *offer* it, or did he only express himself so as that you *concluded* he would give it? The pressing circumstance is that I *must* lay down £1000 by the 1st of May, on account of the purchase of land, which my old family enthusiasm urged me to make. You, I doubt not, have full confidence in my honesty. May I then ask you if you could venture to join with me in a bond for that sum, as then I would take my chance, and, as Sir Joshua says, *game* with my book? Upon my honour, your telling me that you cannot comply with what I propose will not in the least surprise me, or make any manner of difference as to my opinion of your friendship. I mean to ask Sir Joshua if he will join; for indeed I should be vexed to sell my *Magnum Opus* for a great deal less than its intrinsic value. I meant to publish on Shrove Tuesday. But if I can get out within the month of March I shall be satisfied. I have now, I think, *four* or *five* sheets to print, which will make my second volume about 575 pages. But I shall have more cancels. That *nervous* mortal W. G. H.<sup>1</sup> is not satisfied with my report of some particulars *which I wrote down from his own mouth*, and is so much agitated, that Courtenay has persuaded me to allow a *new edition* of them by H. himself to be made at H's expense. Besides, it has occurred to me that when I mention a *literary fraud* by Rolt, the historian, in going to Dublin and publishing Akenside's *Pleasures of the Imagination*, with his own name,<sup>2</sup> I may not be able to authenticate it, as Johnson is dead, and he may have relations who may take it up as an offence, perhaps a *libel*. Courtenay suggests that you may perhaps get intelligence

<sup>1</sup> Hamilton, see letter of 9 February 1788 (note), p. 340.

The cancel was on p. 396 of the second volume of the first edition of the *Life*. The passage originally read: 'His friend Mr Hamilton, when dining at my house one day expressed this so well that I wrote down his words "Johnson's great excellence in maintaining the wrong side of an argument was a splendid perversion. If you could contrive it

so as to have his fair opinion upon a subject, without any bias from personal prejudice, or from a wish to conquer—it was wisdom, it was justice, it was convincing, it was overpowering." In the next paragraph the blank was originally filled with the name Hamilton (Proof-sheets of the *Life*)

<sup>2</sup> This passage, perhaps because of information supplied by Malone from Ireland, was retained *Life* 1 359.

whether it was *true*. The Bishop of Dromore can probably tell, as he knows a great deal about Rolt. In case of doubt, should I not cancel the leaf, and either omit the curious anecdote or give it as a story which Johnson laughingly told as having circulated?

There is a glaring mistake into which you and I fell where we agreed that in No. 39 of the *Adventurer*, on Sleep, 'a translation from Statius, marked C. B, is *certainly* the performance of Dr. Charles Bathurst', for unluckily I find that Bathurst's name was *Richard*. I think I may set that right in my Errata.<sup>1</sup>

You have satisfied me that the *Fordian* pamphlet could not be of the date ascribed to it. Yet still Macklin, I think, may have had it, and mistaken the date of the ingenious fabrication. Be that as it may, I shall take care to have your admirable detection brought into view in some of the papers. You may depend on my sending you whatever reviews mention you, besides the *Monthly* which Arnold sends. The *Annalytical*<sup>2</sup> promised their account in a *future* number.

I was not at the Club last Tuesday; but there was one black-ball, which excluded the Bishop of Peterborough. Courtenay engaged to eat hodge-podge with me; but sent a note that I should not wait, as he was to be late at the house. His son and my brother dined with me; and went away. Courtenay did not come till about ten and took his mess, which had been kept for him. Poor fellow. His firmness of mind is amazing. Is there no hope of a remittance to him from Ireland? Pray don't hint my inquiring. It is hard that his party cannot do anything essential for him.

I have thus worked out a letter. Your chance in the lottery is still afloat. I shall acquaint you the very moment I hear its fate.

<sup>1</sup> This was done. In the list of 'Corrections', &c., opposite p. 1, we read: 'P. 136, l. 6, *for* is certainly the performance of Dr. Charles Bathurst, *read* has been erroneously ascribed to Dr. Bathurst, whose

christian name was Richard.'

<sup>2</sup> The *Analytical Review* for December 1790 contains a review of Malone's Shakespeare; at the end of the article a more detailed criticism is promised for a future number.

Your

Your account of Dublin luxury is picturesque. The *four silver tubs* convey a great deal to my imagination. Pray present my best compliments to Lord Sunderlin and the Ladies. My daughters return yours and I ever am most affectionately and sincerely yours,

James Boswell

Pray write directly.<sup>1</sup>

296. To Edmond Malone<sup>2</sup>

8 March <1791>.

I have before me your *volunteer* letter of February 24th, and one of 5th current, which, if you have dated it right, has come with wonderful expedition. You may be perfectly sure that I have not the smallest fault to find with your disinclination to come again under any pecuniary engagements for others, after having suffered so much. Dilly proposes that he and Baldwin<sup>3</sup> should each advance £200 on the credit of my book; and if they do so, I shall manage well enough, for I now find I can have £600 in Scotland on the credit of my rents, and thus I shall get the £1000 paid in May.

You would observe some stupid lines on Mr. Burke in the *Oracle*, 'by Mr. Boswell'!<sup>4</sup> I instantly wrote to Mr. Burke, expressing my indignation at such impertinence, and had next morning a most obliging answer. Sir William Scott told me I could have no legal redress. So I went *civilly* to Bell, and he promised to mention *handsomely* that *James Boswell, Esq.* was not the author of the lines. The note, however, on the subject was a second impertinence. But I can do nothing. I wish Fox, in his bill upon libels, would make a heavy penalty the consequence of forging any person's name to any composition, which, in reality, such a trick amounts to.

In the night between the last of February and first of this month, I had a sudden relief from the inexplicable disorder,

<sup>1</sup> Inserted, reversed, at the top of the first page.

<sup>2</sup> From *Johnsonian Miscellanes*, ii. 35

<sup>3</sup> Henry Baldwin was the printer of the first and second editions of the *Life*.

<sup>4</sup> See issue of 5 March 1791, Bell's apology appeared 8 March.

which

which occasionally clouds my mind and makes me miserable, and it is amazing how well I have been since. Your friendly admonition as to excess in wine *has* been often too applicable; but upon this late occasion I erred on the other side. However, as I am now free from my restriction to Courtenay,<sup>1</sup> I shall be much upon my guard; for, to tell the truth, I did go too deep the day before yesterday, having dined with Michael Angelo Taylor,<sup>2</sup> and then supped at the London Tavern with the stewards of the Humane Society,<sup>3</sup> and continued till I know not what hour in the morning. John Nichols<sup>4</sup> was joyous to a pitch of bacchanalian vivacity. I am to dine with him next Monday; an excellent city party, Alderman Curtis, Deputy Birch, &c. &c. I rated him gently on his saying so little of your Shakespeare. He is ready to receive more ample notice. You may depend on your having whatever reviews that mention you sent directly. Have I told you that Murphy has written *An Essay on the Life and Writings of Dr Johnson*, to be prefixed to the new edition of his works?<sup>5</sup> He wrote it in a month, and has received £200 for it. I am quite resolved now to keep the property of my *Magnum Opus*; and I flatter myself I shall not repent it.

My title, as we settled it, is 'The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D., comprehending an account of his studies and various works, in chronological order, his conversations with many eminent persons, a series of his letters to celebrated men, and several original pieces of his composition: the whole exhibiting a view of literature and literary men in Great Britain, for near half a century, during which he flourished.' It will be very kind if you will suggest what yet occurs. I hoped to have published to-day; but it will be about a month yet before I launch.

<sup>1</sup> See letter of 4 December 1790, p. 405.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Angelo Taylor (1757-1834), M.P. for Poole, one of the members of the committee for the prosecution at the trial of Warren Hastings. See the *Diary of Mme D'Arblay*, iii. 492-3.

<sup>3</sup> See letter of 9 April 1790, p. 392.

<sup>4</sup> Editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine*.

<sup>5</sup> Arthur Murphy's essay was printed in 1792, for which he received, according to Nichols (*Literary Anecdotes*, ix. 159), £300.

297. To Edmond Malone<sup>1</sup>

My dear Malone,

London, 12 March 1791.

Being the depositary of your chance in the lottery, I am under the disagreeable necessity of communicating the bad news that it has been drawn a *blank*. I am very sorry, both on your account and that of your sisters and my own; for had your share of good fortune been £3,166 13 4, I should have hoped for a loan to accomodate me. As it is, I shall, as I wrote to you, be enabled to weather my difficulties for some time. But I am still in great anxiety about the sale of my book. I find so many people shake their heads at the *two quartos* and *two guineas*. Courtenay is clear that I should sound Robinson, and accept of a thousand guineas, if he will give that sum. Meantime, the title-page must be made as good as may be. It appears to me that mentioning his studies, works, conversations, and letters is not sufficient, and I would suggest, 'comprehending an account, in chronological order, of his studies, works, friendships, acquaintance, and other particulars, his conversations with eminent men, a series of his letters to various persons. Also several original pieces of his composition never before published. The Whole, &c.' You will probably be able to assist me in expressing my idea, and arranging the parts. In the Advertisement I intend to mention the letter to Lord Chesterfield and perhaps the interview with the King and the names of the correspondents in alphabetical order. How should *chronological order* stand in the order of the members of my title? I had at first *celebrated correspondents*, which I don't like. How would it do to say, 'his conversations and epistolary correspondence with eminent (or celebrated) persons'? Shall it be '*different works*', and '*various particulars*'? In short, it is difficult to decide.

Courtenay was with me this morning. What a mystery is his going on at all!<sup>2</sup> Yet he looks well, talks well, dresses well, keeps his mare—in short, is in all respects like a Parliament man.

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the Adam Collection.

<sup>2</sup> Despite his bankruptcy.

I sent you one of Sir Joshua's *Discourses*<sup>1</sup> for yourself singly, and next day four for Lord Charlemont,<sup>2</sup> Lord Sunderlin, and the Jephsons. These all under cover of Mr. Lees. Four I sent under cover of the Provost for the Archbishop of Tuam,<sup>3</sup> the Lord Chancellor, and the Bishops of Killaloe and Dromore. Sir Joshua had sent one to the Provost himself.

I am truly sorry for Lord Charlemont's illness, and most sincerely wish he may soon <be><sup>4</sup> restored to his friends and country.

Do you know, that my bad spirits are returned upon me to a certain degree; and such is the sickly fondness for change of place, and imagination of relief, that I sometimes think you are happier by being in Dublin, than one is in this great metropolis, where hardly any man cares for another. I am persuaded I should relish your Irish dinners very much.

I have at last got chambers in the Temple, in the very staircase where Johnson lived,<sup>5</sup> and when my *Magnum Opus* is fairly launched, there shall I make a trial. God bless you, my dear friend, I am ever most warmly yours,

James Boswell.

Holding myself bound to notify to you the fate of your ticket, I have taken that opportunity to write. I know not what is become of my own, as it is not registered. I dined at Dilly's on Thursday with Cumberland, Sharp,<sup>6</sup> Steady Reed<sup>7</sup> &c. His Steadiness said that I must not conclude that there are not many of your edition still in the hands of the trade, and will be for sometime, and yet the sale be good. Pray could not you be of some service to my work by inquiring whether some of the Irish booksellers would not take some? I trust to be out on the 15 of April. When are we to see you?

<sup>1</sup> Boswell was Secretary for Foreign Correspondence in the Royal Academy.

<sup>2</sup> James Caulfield (1728-99), fourth Viscount, afterwards first Earl of Charlemont, a member of the Literary Club. Charlemont, whose villa was near Dublin, was an intimate friend of Lord Sunderlin and Malone.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph Deane Bourke

<sup>4</sup> Manuscript torn.

<sup>5</sup> In Inner Temple Lane.

<sup>6</sup> Probably Richard Sharpe, nicknamed 'Conversation Sharpe', a friend of Richard Cumberland, the dramatist.

<sup>7</sup> Isaac Reed, Boswell's 'steady' friend, for whom see letter of 12 April 1790, p. 395 n. 2.



298. <To Lord Hawkesbury><sup>1</sup>

My Lord, Great Portland Street, 23 March 1791.

Circumstances with which I do not presume to trouble your Lordship have kept my mind in so unpleasing a state that I have too long delayed to acknowledge your Lordship's very polite and satisfactory letter, for which I return your Lordship my sincere thanks

Perhaps Mr. Cator, or my old friend, your Lordship's neighbour Mr. Claxton, may be so good as to afford me an opportunity of assuring your Lordship in person of the great respect with which I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

much obliged

obedient humble servant,

James Boswell.

## 299. To the Reverend William Temple

My dear Temple, London, 2 April 1791.

I return you Mr. Powlett's letter with which I am much pleased, and having according to your desire shewn it to honest David, we had last night a conference upon the subject which is truly interesting to your family. He agrees with me that if Mr. Powlett and your daughter can be *sure* of £500 a year, such a match ought by no means to be rejected. He seems to me to have a very just view of what good may be derived from great connections; and from his having had so much experience of high life, he is not dazzled by it. If a man can associate with the great and escape from 'folly, vanity, and vice', there is no doubt that his manners and even sentiments will be refined and elevated; and the probable hopes of solid advantages to be obtained from the regard of those who must have influence

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the British Museum. The recipient is not named, but was probably Lord Hawkesbury, for whom see letter of 1 November 1790, p. 403, where the friendship between the peer and Mr. Cator is referred to, as it is here.

in the disposal of offices, which must be given in general as they desire, afford a rational ground for perseverance in cultivating their friendship by all honourable means. If, then, we can be sure of £500 a year, and have besides such hopes, I really think it would be unreasonable to object as to *circumstances*. But, my dear friend, let us have a *certainty* of £500 or even £400 a year. Your daughter is so amiable and accomplished that I should take a sincere interest in her happiness, though she had not the strong claim of being my Temple's daughter.

Your kindness to me fairly makes me shed tears. Alas, I fear that my constitutional melancholy, which returns in such dismal fits and is now aggravated by the loss of my valuable wife, must prevent me from any permanent felicity in this life. I snatch *gratifications*; but have no *comfort*, at least very little. Yet your *encouraging* letters make me think at times that I may yet, by God's blessing, attain to a portion of happiness, such as philosophy and religion concur in assuring us that this state of progressive being allows. I get bad rest in the night, and then I brood over all my complaints—the *sickly mind* which I have had from my early years—the disappointment of my hopes of success in life—the irrevocable separation between me and that excellent woman who was my cousin, my friend, and my wife—the embarrassment of my affairs—the disadvantage to my children in having so wretched a father—nay, the want of *absolute certainty* of being happy after death, the *sure prospect* of which is *frightful*. No more of this.

Wednesday, 6 April.

Thus far I wrote on Saturday; when, feeling myself unhappy and restless, I sallied out with intention to go to the play at Drury Lane Theatre, *The Siege of Belgrade*, a new opera, of which I had heard much as a gay exhibition. But the house was so crowded I could not get in. I then called on old Macklin,<sup>1</sup> the comedian, whom I found with a mind active and cheerful in his ninety second or third year. I could not but wonder, while he related theatrical stories *sixty years old*, and gave me an animated sketch of another comedy in five acts, which he

<sup>1</sup> Charles Macklin (? 1697–1797) published no more plays.

has now finished, and will come out *next year*. Here sat I *forty years younger than him*, listless and desponding, and unable to rid my mind of a disagreeable sensation, as if I had been sitting in *Edinburgh*. I really, my dear Temple, believe that as much pain may be suffered from *antipathies* as from almost any cause. Would it not *torture* you to be again at Professor Hunter's, eating *jeel*?<sup>1</sup> The *possibility* of a *disturbed imagination* reducing me to the mode of existence in my youth frightens me. Alas! what *real advances* have I made *above* that state? How delusive is this lowspirited thought!—But indeed I much fear that to a speculating and very feeling mind all that life affords will at times appear of no effect. When I recal the infinite variety of scenes through which I have passed, in my moments of sound sensation, I am elated, but, in moments of depression, I either forget them all or they seem indifferent.

My *Life of Johnson* is at last drawing to a close. I am correcting the last sheet, and have only to write an Advertisement, to make out a note of Errata, and to correct a second sheet of contents, one being done. I really hope to publish it on the 25 current. My old and most intimate friend may be sure that a copy will be sent to him. I am at present in such bad spirits that I have every fear concerning it—that I may get no profit, nay, may lose—that the publick may be disappointed and think that I have done it poorly—that I may make many enemies, and even have quarrels—Yet perhaps the very reverse of all this may happen.

When my book is launched, I shall, if I am alive and in tolerable health and spirits, have some furniture put into my chambers in the Temple, and force myself to sit there some hours every day, and to attend regularly in Westminster Hall. The chambers cost me £20 yearly, and I may reckon furniture and a lad to wait there occasionally £20 more. I doubt whether I shall get fees equal to the expence. I am to dine with Sir William Scott, the King's Advocate, at the Commons, tomorrow, and shall have a serious consultation with him, as he has always encouraged me. It is to be a family party, where I am to meet Miss Bagnal (his Lady's sister) who may probably have six or

<sup>1</sup> See letter of 1 May 1761, p. 7

seven hundred a year. She is about seven and twenty, and he tells me lively and gay, *a Ranelagh girl*, but of excellent principles, in so much that she reads prayers to the servants in her father's family, every Sunday evening. 'Let me see such a woman', cried I; and accordingly, I am to see her. She has refused young and fine gentlemen 'Bravo', cried I. We see then what her taste is. Here now, my Temple, I am, my fluttering self.—A scheme—an adventure seizes my fancy. Perhaps I may not like her; and what should I do with such a companion, unless she should really take a particular liking to me, which is surely not probable; and as I am conscious of my distempered mind, could I *honestly* persuade her to unite her fate with mine? As to my daughters—did I see a rational prospect of good by such a scheme—I should not neglect it on their account; though I should certainly be liberal to them. They have twice had little parties for cards and musick, and have done wonderfully well. Hawkins was with us both times.

What a horrible rumour of war is this! To join the Turks!—It *must* not be. But perhaps *some* good may arise from Pitt's arrogance. There may be another navy promotion, and your son may get rank. I am hesitating whether I should not write one of my characteristical pamphlets upon this crisis, 'An Appeal to the People upon the threatened project of involving this country in a war with Russia in order to assist the Turks'.

Approach thou like the rugged Russian Bear,  
The arm'd Rhinoceros or Hyrcanian Tyger:  
Take any shape but that.<sup>1</sup>

I am thinking to curtail my poem on the Slave Trade and throw it into the world just before the great question comes on next Wednesday.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Macbeth*, III. iv 101 Boswell did not write the projected pamphlet

<sup>2</sup> He published it in this month, probably in the following week. It is reviewed in the April number of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, where the prophecy is made that the anonymous author will soon be discovered,

and the phrase 'Aut Boswell, aut—' is used. The pamphlet was long lost, and was thought to have been suppressed, but at last a copy was acquired by the Bodleian. Others have turned up in the British Museum and in the Yale Library. A copy which belonged to Horace Walpole

Pray let me know the subject of your intended publication.<sup>1</sup> Worthy Langton is in town.

Your little friend James is quite reconciled to Westminster School; is grown a manly fellow. *He*, I trust, will be a prosperous barrister

There is no foundation for the match between Miss Palmer and Dr. B.<sup>2</sup>—she is angry at me for talking of it. But I was only one of many.

Best compliments and love to all with you. Let me hear more about Mr. Powlett. I ever am

Most affectionately yours,

J. B.

### 300. To George Dempster<sup>3</sup>

My dear Dempster,

London, 19 April 1791.

We must not entirely lose sight of one another, or rather, we must not suffer 'out of sight out of mind' to be applicable to two such old friends, who have always lived pleasantly together, though of principles directly opposite. I was happy that your accepting one of Mr. Pulteney's seats proved a false

was sold at Anderson's in New York City in 1922

The title-page reads. *No Abolition of Slavery; or the Universal Empire of Love, a Poem. Facit indignatio versus* HORAT *Omnia vincit amor.* OVID London: Printed for R. Faulder, in New Bond-Street. MDCCXCI [Price One Shilling and Sixpence.] 24 pp 4to

Burke, Wilkes, Pitt, and Thurlow are apostrophized at various points in the poem, but the whole is addressed to the 'most pleasing' of her sex, Miss —, who has been identified, perhaps rather unconvincingly, with the Miss Bagnal mentioned in this letter. The verses are, of course, wholly unworthy of the author.

<sup>1</sup> See letter of 4 April 1775, note 3, p. 218.

<sup>2</sup> Blagden, see postscript to letter of 29 January, p. 418. In Lady Thomond's account of Boswell (*Farington Diary*, 28 September 1806), one may perhaps detect a lingering animosity, for she asserts her doubts as to his having 'any strong feeling of regard for anybody', despite his pleasant qualities, which she recognizes as being useful in 'removing reserve' and causing 'mirth in company'.

<sup>3</sup> From the *Letters of James Boswell to the Reverend W. J. Temple* (1857), pp. 405–7. The recipient was George Dempster (1732–1818), one of Boswell's earliest friends, joint author with him and Andrew Erskine of *Critical Structures on Mallet's 'Elvira'* (c. 1762). Dempster found himself often mentioned in the *Life*, and not always flatteringly.

rumour,

rumour, for it would have been a sad degradation ; but though not in Parliament, you can be mischievous enough as a '*Whig dog*', as Johnson would say, or rather, as something even beyond that ; for you are for that most horrible anarchy, the French Revolution.

I some time ago resigned my Recordership of Carlisle. I perceived that no advantage would accrue from it ; I could satisfy you in *conversation* that I was right.

The melancholy event of losing my valuable wife will, I fear, never allow me to have real comfort. You cannot imagine how it hangs upon my spirits ; yet I can talk and write, and in short *force myself* to a wonderful degree. I enclose you a poem<sup>1</sup> which I have published, upon a subject on which I never heard your sentiments, but I could lay my life you are one of the pretty theorists ; however you will have candour enough to allow that I have *worked* well

I have a good house in Great Portland Street. My two eldest daughters live with me ; my youngest is at a boarding-school at Chelsea ; my eldest son is at Eton, my second at Westminster. I am sadly straitened in my circumstances ; I can but *exist*, as to *expense* ; but they are so good to me here, that I have a full share of the metropolitan advantages.

My *Magnum Opus*, the *Life of Dr. Johnson*, in two volumes quarto, is to be published on Monday, 16th May.<sup>2</sup> It is too great a book to be given in presents, as I gave my *Tour*, so you must not expect one, though you yourself form a part of its multifarious contents. I really think it will be the most entertaining collection that has appeared in this age. When it is fairly launched I mean to stick close to Westminster Hall, and it will be truly kind if you recommend me appeals, or causes of any sort.

Pray let me have a long account of you as a *rusticus*.<sup>3</sup> My compliments to Mrs. Dempster.

Ever most truly yours,

James Boswell.

<sup>1</sup> *No Abolition of Slavery* ; see preceding letter.

<sup>2</sup> The twenty-eighth anniversary of his first meeting with Johnson.

<sup>3</sup> 'On retiring from Parliament (i.e. in 1790), he devoted himself to the promotion of agriculture and manufactures in North Britain. He

Mr. Boswell

301. To <Frances> Abington<sup>1</sup>

Great Portland Street, 15 June 1791.  
(Midnight).

Mr. Boswell presents his compliments to Mrs. Abington. It gave him very great pleasure to mention in his *Life of Dr. Johnson*, what that great man said of a lady whom Mr. Boswell agreed with him in admiring, and he is not a little flattered that Mrs. Abington has been pleased to allow any merit to the biographer, in that respect

Sir Joshua Reynolds's communication of Mrs Abington's goodness in supposing herself at all obliged to Mr Boswell, emboldened him to call upon her; and happy shall he be if *a simple act of justice* shall prove the means of his obtaining the friendship of one whose favourable opinion it shall be his study to cultivate.

302. To the Right Reverend Dr. John Douglas<sup>2</sup>

My dear Lord, Great Portland Street, 17 June 1791.

Sir Richard Symons having asked me to a very pleasant dinner party tomorrow, I shall not have the honour of making my bows in Windsor Castle till Sunday morning. My son shall obey your Lordship's summons, and learn from his father to respect *John Carlol*, as Sir Joseph Banks calls your Lordship, of whom I ever am, with all sincerity, the much obliged and faithful humble servant.

James Boswell.

established an agricultural society on his estate.' C. Rogers, *Boswelliana*.

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the Adam Collection. Mrs Abington (1737-1815), the 'elegant and fashionable actress', who had been the leading actress at Drury Lane and, after 1782, at Covent Garden, had recently retired from the stage. She was the subject of a well-known retort of Johnson's to Boswell: 'Sir, she is a favourite

of the publick; and when the publick cares the thousandth part for you that it does for her, I will go to your benefit, too' (*Life*, II 330). Cf Fanny Burney, *Diary*, II 143

Sir Joshua Reynolds painted a number of portraits of Mrs. Abington

<sup>2</sup> From the original in the British Museum. See letter of 23 August 1789, p 376, note 2.

My

303. To John Wilkes<sup>1</sup>

Great Portland Street, Portland Place, No. 47,  
My dear Sir, Saturday, 25 June <1791>.

You said to me yesterday of my *Magnum Opus*, 'it is a wonderful book'. Do confirm this to me, so as I may have your *testimonium* in my archives at Auchinleck. I trust we shall meet while you are in town.

Ever most truly yours,  
James Boswell.

304. To Sir William Scott<sup>2</sup>

My dear Scott, Maidstone, 9 August 1791.

The little *mal entendu* which has happened between us I do not regret, as it has given me the comfort of being satisfied that you value me more than I could fully allow myself to believe, for *ed anche Io son Pittore*, I—roaring boy as I am—have my *nerves* and my *diffidence* as well as you. My resolving not to come to you was owing to a very little *pique*, and a considerable degree of *propriety*; for I did think that it would not be right for me to throw the least damp upon your company, however conscious I was that it must be owing to misapprehension. I therefore resisted your second kind <note and><sup>3</sup> went to Mr. Cator's at Beck(enham) on Saturday morning, in order to pass two days in the delightful county of Kent, between the assizes at Chelmsford and Maidstone. He carried me that day to dine with his neighbour Mr. Jenner, the Proctor, a good man and true; and there I gave Sir William Scott as my toast and drank a bumper to his health; and by mentioning that I was asked to dine with him, had that share of the feast, which to me is something, the *vanity* of being one of his convivial friends. You see, then, there was no malice or ill will lurking in my breast.

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the British Museum.

<sup>2</sup> From the original in the Adam Collection. For the recipient, afterwards Lord Stowell, a member of the Literary Club, see letter of 2 April above, and *Tour to the*

*Hebrides*, pp. 20–1. 'Mr. Scott's amiable manners and attachment to our *Socrates*, at once united me to him.' A copy of the *Life* which Boswell presented to Sir William is in my possession

<sup>3</sup> Manuscript torn.

Yesterday



Yesterday I received here your obliging letter, the *principle* of which I readily admit and thank you <heartily> for setting me quite at ease. <As> to the *application*, be so good as to recollect that I have not published any of *your* folly, for a very obvious reason ; and what I have published of your share in the Johnsonian conversations was revised by yourself, upon which occasion I enjoyed one of the pleasantest days I ever passed in my life. *You*, therefore, my good Sir William, have no reason even to *grumble*. If others, as well as myself, sometimes appear as shades to the Great Intellectual Light, I beg to be fairly understood, and that you and my other friends will inculcate upon persons of timidity and reserve that my recording the conversation of so extraordinary a man as Johnson, with its concomitant circumstances, was a *peculiar* undertaking, attended with much anxiety and labour, and that the conversations of people in general are by no means of that nature as to bear being registered and that the task of doing it would be exceedingly irksome to me. Ask me, then, my dear Sir, with none but who are clear of a prejudice which, you see, may easily be cured. I trust there are enough who have it not

I can return you the compliment that I should certainly consider a quarrel with you as a real misfortune. I now do not apprehend that there can be even any coldness, but on the contrary that our friendship is strengthened ; and I assure you that I am, with great respect and affection,

My dear Scott,

Your obliged and

faithful humble servant,

James Boswell.

Pray let me know *on the Home Circuit* that you have received this letter.

### 305. To the Reverend William Temple

My dear Temple,

London, 22 August 1791.

Do not look upon me as unkind because you have not heard from me for some time. My *heart* has been ever warm ; but I have had my *spirits* dissipated. And now I write at  
midnight,

midnight, on the eve of setting out for Auchinleck. My eldest son went thither some time ago to enjoy the grouse shooting. I trusted him alone, as he is a steady boy. I have gone the full round of the Home Circuit, to which I have returned, finding it much more pleasant; and though I did not get a single brief, do not repent of the expence, as I am shewing myself desirous of business, and imbibing legal knowledge. I made an excursion to Portsmouth, and viewed the grand fleet; and there I was assured that the most difficult step in the navy is from midshipman to lieutenant. My first letter to Dundas concerning your son was repeating my words to you, that I was afraid he did not like me (or something to that effect) but that I believed him to be a generous fellow, and therefore advised you to apply to him. I mentioned to you how cordially he expressed himself towards your son when I saw him, and that he was to make a memorandum. I transmitted to him from the circuit your last letter, in one from myself; and I cannot doubt of his sincerity and zeal when an occasion offers. What a life have midshipmen! yet all our admirals have passed through it.

I feel for what you say as to a certain person;<sup>1</sup> but trust it was a casual cloud. Mr. Powlet has never appeared. I shall be glad to see him.

You must know I have had several matrimonial schemes of late. I shall amuse you with them from Auchinleck. One was with Miss Milles, daughter of the late Dean of Exeter, a most agreeable woman *d'une certaine âge*, and with a fortune of £10,000. She has left town for the summer. It was no small circumstance that she said to me, 'Mr. Temple is a charming man'. I hope to be here again on the first of October. My *Magnum Opus*

<sup>1</sup> This would seem to be a reference to some trouble between Temple and his wife. Mrs Temple detested Boswell (*Memours of Archbishop Temple*, p. 8), doubtless because of her husband's habit of confiding to him information of the kind here alluded to. The coldness between Mrs Temple and Boswell is indicated by his failure ever, during this period, to send her his regards, a

formality which he was not, in other instances, given to neglecting. Mrs. Temple died in 1793, but Boswell's letters contain no mention of her death. That Temple was himself prone to such enthusiasms as Boswell shows in the next paragraph of this letter is abundantly evident from the letters below, notably that of 21 June 1793, p. 447 and that of, 14 October 1793, p. 458.

sells wonderfully. 1200 are now gone and we hope the whole 1700 may be gone before Christmas I *must* go to bed.

Ever most affectionately yours,  
James Boswell.

### 306. To the Reverend William Temple

My dear Temple, London, 22 November 1791.

Another sad chasm in our correspondence is to be lamented. I wrote to you before I went to Scotland; since then I have not heard from you, except by receiving a few lines with an order to receive the title-deeds of Allardeen<sup>1</sup> Pray what would you have done about that matter, as my visit to you cannot be for a long time?—

I had a very unhappy time in Ayrshire. My house at Auchinleck seemed deserted and melancholy; and it brought upon my mind with increased force the recollection of my having lost my dear and valuable wife. My *London spirits* were soon exhausted. I sunk into languor and gloom. I felt myself very unfit to transact business with my tenants, or indeed with any body To escape from what I felt at Auchinleck I visited a good deal; but, alas, I could not escape from myself. In short you may see that I was exceedingly ill. I hoped to be relieved when I got to London; but my depression of spirits has continued; and still though I go into jovial scenes I feel no pleasure in existence except the mere gratification of the senses. O my friend, this is sad!

I have imagined that I was quite unable to write even a letter. I was glad to find that there was warmth enough remaining about my heart to animate me to answer, in two posts, an anxious letter which I received from your son on his return from Newfoundland. Poor fellow! I sincerely feel for his situation, of which (as I mentioned to him) I have a stronger impression since passing a day and a night on board of Captain Macbride's<sup>2</sup> ship in the grand fleet, last summer. I have assured your son that I shall not fail to remind Mr. Dundas of his kind promise. What more can be done?

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Temple's estate.

<sup>2</sup> Probably John Macbride, who later became Rear-Admiral

My spirits have been still more sunk, by seeing Sir Joshua Reynolds almost as low as myself. He has for more than two months past had a pain in his blind eye, the effect of which has been to occasion a weakness in the other, and he broods over the dismal apprehension of becoming quite blind.<sup>1</sup> He has been kept so low as to diet that he is quite relaxed and desponding. He who used to be looked upon as perhaps the most happy man in the world is now as I tell you. I force myself to be a great deal with him, to do what is in my power to amuse him. Your friend Miss Palmer's assiduity and attention to him in every respect is truly charming.

Am I to hear no more of Miss Temple's lover?

I keep chambers open in the Temple. I attend in Westminster Hall. But there is not the least prospect of my having business.

This is a desultory querulous letter which I have wished these several weeks to write. Pray try to do me some good. My daughters join me in best compliments, and I ever am most affectionately yours,

J. B.

### 307. To the Reverend Charles Burney<sup>2</sup>

Great Portland Street, near Portland Chapel, No. 47,

Dear Sir,

2 January 1792.

I am appointed by my friend Mr. Dilly to a very agreeable *negociation* in which I hope I shall be successful. It is to request that you will dine with him on *Thursday next at 4*, to meet me and some others.

Pray let me have your answer.

Sincerely wishing you the compliments of the season, I remain,

Dear Sir,

Your faithful humble servant,

James Boswell.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Joshua's blindness never became complete. He lived only three months longer.

<sup>2</sup> From the original in the Bodleian Library. The date is repeated at the end of the letter as '1 January 1792'. The address is 'To Mr. Burney at

his Academy, Hammersmith'. The recipient was Charles Burney (1757-1817), son of Dr. Charles Burney and brother of Fanny. His school was at Fair Lawn House, Hammersmith from 1786 to 1793.

308. To Dr. John Coakley Lettsom<sup>1</sup>

Great Portland Street,

My dear Sir,

27 January 1792.

I am extremely sorry that an engagement of some standing to a friend at Kentish Town prevents me from accepting your obliging invitation. I am flattered by knowing that the learned foreigner wishes to see me ; and I hope we shall meet at another time. I regret that I see you so seldom.

I am *not cheerful* at present ; the visible wearing away of Sir Joshua Reynolds<sup>2</sup> depresses me much ; and besides I have not been so attentive as I should be to your most friendly recommendation as to regimen. *Spero meliora*.

I ever am

Yours very sincerely,

James Boswell.

## 309. To the Reverend William Temple

My dear Temple,

London, 29 March 1792.

Still I cannot write a long letter, though I got a frank yesterday on purpose from the Bishop of London. I had this morning the pleasure of Mr. Powlet's company at breakfast, and like him much. He is to take a part of our family dinner on Sunday. I ever am

Most affectionately yours,

James Boswell.

310. To James Abercrombie<sup>3</sup>

Sir,

London, 11 June 1792.

The packet with which your spontaneous kindness has been pleased to honour me, after being a little while delayed by the

<sup>1</sup> From T. J. Pettigrew, *Memoirs of John Coakley Lettsom*, II. 386.

<sup>2</sup> He died 23 February.

<sup>3</sup> From Nichols, *Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century*, vii. 314. The recipient was

James Abercrombie, a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania in the year 1776. He received the degree of A. M. from the same institution in 1790. Although for a time a merchant in Philadelphia, he became a ship's

ship's having put into Ireland, came safely to my hands. The two letters from Dr. Johnson to American gentlemen are a valuable acquisition. I received them in time to be inserted in the second edition of my *Life* of that great man, which is now in the press. It is to be in three volumes, octavo, and will contain a good many additions. A copy from the author<sup>1</sup> shall be sent to you, hoping that you will allow it a place in your library. Meantime, Sir, my grateful acknowledgments to you shall be wafted across the Atlantic.

In the letter to Bishop White,<sup>2</sup> I observe Dr. Johnson says, 'I take the liberty which you give me, of troubling you with a letter, of which you will please to fill up the direction'. There must, therefore, have been a third letter of my illustrious friend's sent to your continent.<sup>3</sup> If the respectable gentleman, under whose care it was transmitted, can procure a copy of it for me, I shall be much obliged to him, and to you, of whom I beg pardon for giving you more trouble after what you have done for me.

You are, I find, Sir, a true Johnsonian; and you may believe that I have great pleasure in being of any service to one of that description. I have not yet been able to discover any more of his sermons, besides those left for publication by Dr. Taylor. I am informed by the Lord Bishop of Salisbury that he gave an excellent one to a clergyman, who preached and published it in his own name, on some public occasion. But the Bishop has not as yet told me the name, and seems unwilling to do it. Yet I flatter myself I shall get at it.<sup>3</sup>

Your list of Johnson's works, and of what has been written

priest in the Episcopal Church, and was from 1794 to 1832 assistant minister of the united Episcopal churches of Philadelphia

For Boswell's expression of gratitude, see *Life*, II 206 ff., where the two letters furnished by Abercrombie are printed.

<sup>1</sup> Now in the Adam Collection.

<sup>2</sup> William White (1748-1836), first Bishop of Pennsylvania, consecrated in London in 1787. The letter which

Johnson sent to him to be forwarded was addressed to the Reverend William Samuel Johnson, who lived in Stratford, Connecticut. The letter is still preserved there. Cf. *Letters of Samuel Johnson*, I. 209.

<sup>3</sup> He did not succeed. In August 1773, Johnson told Boswell (*Tour to the Hebrides*, p. 67) that he had composed about forty sermons. More than a third of these have not come down to us.

concerning

concerning him, has what is most valuable. There have, however, been various other publications concerning him, several of which I have mentioned in my book. If you think it worth your while to collect all that can be had, I will do all that I can to assist you, though some of them attack me with a good deal of ill-nature, the effect of which, however, I assure you, is by no means painful

I now send you a poetical review of Dr. Johnson's literary and moral character, by my friend Mr. Courtenay; in which, though I except to several passages, you will find some very good writing.

It will be kind if you will be so good as to let me know if any thing be published in the new world relative to Johnson, My worthy bookseller, Mr. Dilly, will take care of whatever packets you may have to send to me. I am, Sir, your much obliged humble servant,

James Boswell.

### 311. To Lord Lisburne<sup>\*</sup>

My Lord, Bichham, near Plymouth, 21 September 1792.

In my way to Cornwall to visit our worthy friend Temple, I intended according to your Lordship's obliging invitation to have payed my respects to your Lordship and Lady Lisburne at Mamhead. But I found myself hurried, and deferred it till my return. My two eldest daughters are with me; and if not inconvenient, will do ourselves the honour to dine at Mamhead on *Monday* next. I request that your Lordship will take the trouble to let me know by a note, which I shall inquire for at the posthouse at Chudleigh. My daughters join me in respectful compliments and I ever am,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient  
humble servant,

James Boswell.

<sup>\*</sup> From the original in the British Museum. The recipient was Wilmot Vaughan, fourth Viscount Lisburne, Temple's cousin and patron.

Boswell later speaks of this trip as

'a very long journey into the western parts of the Island' (Appendix I, letter of 2 October 1792). If he carried out his original intention, he went as far as Land's End.

Dear

312. To John Wilkes<sup>1</sup>

Dear Sir,

Great Portland Street, 24 December 1792.

Notwithstanding a late seasonable relief, I am not yet free from vexatious embarrassments. But I should be very uneasy if I could not restore what was put into my hands upon the most liberal terms, when it is of any consequence to you, still more, when I am informed that at this moment trifles are of importance. I am very sorry to find that I cannot command it till next week. But you may depend upon its being then gratefully returned I am, dear Sir,

Your obliged friend  
and humble servant,  
James Boswell.

## 313. To the Reverend William Temple

My dear Temple,

London, 26 February 1793.

I have no time now for our usual reflections on wretched dilatory habits. I have from day to day been uneasy that I did not answer your kind letters; and now I am within a few hours of setting out for Auchinleck, honest David having secured me a place in the Carlisle coach to Ferrybridge, that I may have an opportunity to stop, should I be too much fatigued. It is quite right that I should now go down. The choice of a minister to a worthy parish<sup>2</sup> is a matter of very great importance; and I cannot be sure of the real wishes of the people without being present. Only think, Temple, how serious a duty I am about to discharge. *I James Boswell, Esq!* You know what vanity that name includes. I have promised to come down on purpose, and *his Honour's* goodness is gratefully acknowledged. Besides I have several matters of consequence to my estate to adjust; and though the journey will no doubt be uncomfortable, and my being *alone* in that house where once I was so happy, be dreary in a woful degree, the consciousness of duty, and being busy will, I hope, support me. I shall write to you my friend

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the British Museum.

<sup>2</sup> A successor to the Rev. John

Dun of Auchinleck, for whose death see Appendix I, letter of 22 October 1792 Cf p. 491.

from



from my *seat*. I am to be there only about three weeks; for I return early in April to appear in an appeal before the House of Lords, and to publish the second edition of my *Life of Dr. Johnson*, for which I have lately received some more additions of great value.

Mean time I send you from Payne's catalogue :

Small Edition of Brumoy, *Théâtre des Grecs*.

Thornton's 'Plautus'.

I forget the price. They are above £4. 4s

Also Horsley (BP. of St David's) *Sermon*.

Hay's Ditto.

*Village, a Poem*; and by the same Authour,<sup>1</sup> *The Library, a Poem*, as suited to your present zeal, and a *Letter to Fox*, reckoned the best pamphlet that has appeared for some time.<sup>2</sup>

From myself please to receive

Print of Dr. Johnson<sup>3</sup>

Two Numbers of *European Magazine*, containing memoirs of your friend<sup>4</sup>

An excellent little tract on Contentment, by Payley.<sup>5</sup>

I can add no more now, but that I ever am most affectionately yours,

James Boswell.

### 314. To the Reverend William Temple

My dear Temple,

London, 21 June 1793.

Behold my *hand*.—The robbery<sup>6</sup> was only of a few shillings. But the cut on my head and bruises on my arms were sad things,

<sup>1</sup> George Crabbe.

<sup>2</sup> *A Letter to the Right Hon C J F*, occasioned by his motion in the House of Commons respecting Libels, 1792. A second letter on the same subject appeared before the expiration of the year.

<sup>3</sup> Probably an advance copy of the engraving used as a frontispiece to the second edition of the *Life*; it was actually published in April. Such prints were often published and

sold separately from the books for which they were made

<sup>4</sup> The first instalment of an elaborate review of Boswell's *Life of Johnson* appeared in this magazine in August 1791. Four instalments had been printed before this letter was written.

<sup>5</sup> *Reasons for Contentment, addressed to the Labouring Part of the British Public*, 1792.

<sup>6</sup> This passage is the chief source of our knowledge of this incident.

and

and confined me to bed in pain and fever and helplessness as a child many days. By means of Surgeon Earle and Apothecary Devaynes I am now, I thank God, pretty well. This, however, shall be a *crisis* in my life. I trust I shall henceforth be a sober, regular man. Indeed my indulgence in wine has, of late years especially, been excessive. You remember what Lord Eliot said, nay, what you, I am sorry to think, have *seen*. Your suggestion as to my being carried off in a state of intoxication is awful. I thank you for it, my dear friend. It impressed me much, I assure you.

Your *somewhat* mysterious letter (without a date) alarmed me, but not greatly; because though I guess what you mean, I have confidence in your good sense and spirit. You have had experience of such *tender folly*, and after it was passed have been sensible how *weak* it was. I am at the same time aware that a *new instance* seems *stronger* than any former one; and therefore gives us trouble, unless we call in *Reason* to our relief. I, who have often been the victim of such feverishness, *know* that the best cure is *diversion*; and therefore if you find the complaint *obstinate*, remove from St. Gluvias for a time, and dissipate yourself in some place where you can have variety. But I *conjure* you to send me a *promise* that you will not *act* without my consent.

I will do what I can as to John James, and Octavius. I have good interest at Eton; and shall be there soon.

Sir Kit<sup>1</sup> shall be applied to for a safe conveyance of your deeds.

The printer is very slow with my second edition. I hope to have it *out* next week. The additions (above eight sheets) shall be sent to you.

My continental tour<sup>2</sup> is to hold.

I ever am, my dear Temple,

Most affectionately yours,  
James Boswell.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Christopher Hawkins, M.P.

<sup>2</sup> He wrote to his overseer at Auchinleck, 31 May 1793: 'Next

month I am going abroad on a tour to Holland and Flanders, and to pass some time with the combined armies.'

314a. To Bennet Langton<sup>1</sup>

My dear Sir.

Chelmsford, Monday, 15 July 1793.

I came here last Wednesday to attend the circuit. On Friday I went to General Sir John Dalling's<sup>2</sup> at Danbury Place, <a>bout five miles off, and have sojourned there till today, when I am returned to attend the sessions, which begin tomorrow morning. They will finish on Wednesday, so that either that night, or early on Thursday morning, I can pay my respects to you at Warley Camp. Pray write me a line directed to Mr. Stane's, Bookseller, here; to tell me when it will be best to come. I wish to see what is to be seen. If therefore, there be anything particular at night, I can come on Wednesday, take a bed at Brentwood, and be with you again early next morning, and after having fully felt *Castrajuvant*<sup>3</sup> (on a peaceful common) proceed to *Town* in the evening to prepare for my tour to *Valenciennes*, *another guess matter*.<sup>4</sup> Observe that I write in the *form* of your tutor, Tom Warton<sup>5</sup> I ever am, my dear Cavalier,

Yours most cordially,

James Boswell.

Letter to Andrew Gibb, below Had Boswell been able to go, he would have been present at the fall of Valenciennes. See letter of 31 July, below

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the possession of C. B. Tinker. The letter is addressed 'To Major Langton of the Lincolnshire Militia, Warley Camp' The writing has been injured at a few points by the breaking of the seal

<sup>2</sup> Sir John Dalling, Bart, had been Lieutenant-General since 1782 He is mentioned, *passim*, in Horace Twiss, *Life of Lord Chancellor Eldon*

<sup>3</sup> 'Multos castra juvant', Horace *Odes*, 1. 1. 23. *Castra* is of course a reference to Warley Camp For Langton's description of Johnson's visit to Warley Common, see *Life*, iii. 360.

<sup>4</sup> i e quite another affair. See the Oxford English Dictionary, *guess* sb 3

<sup>5</sup> This sentence was added after the completion of the letter Thomas Warton, the famous historian of English poetry, had been Langton's tutor at Trinity College, Oxford, in 1758 Cf *Life*, 1. 336.

The word 'form' seems to refer to the unusual arrangement of the written text. The letter begins on the third page of an ordinary sheet of writing paper, once folded. When this page was filled, Boswell turned the sheet and wrote across the opposite, or left-hand page, so that the writing on one page is perpendicular to that on the other.

315. To Bennet Langton<sup>1</sup>

My dear Sir,

London, 24 July 1793.

Tomorrow's (Friday's) Chelmsford Coach will bring for you two copies of my second edition of Dr. Johnson's *Life*, which are directed for you, to be left at the White Hart, Brentwood. I beseech you to correct a strange *erratum* on the last page but one of the 'Additions' prefixed to Vol. I., for '*without* much regret', read '*with*', &c.

I was sorry to leave you sooner than you kindly wished. But it was really necessary for me to be in town, and, as I candidly owned to you, I had enough of a camp. In my convalescent state, another disturbed night would have hurt me much.

O London! London! there let me be; there let me see my friends; there a fair chance is given for pleasing and being pleased.

I beg you may present my best respects to the gentlemen of your regiment, whose civilities to me I never shall forget; and if your son be with you give my kind compliments to him. Above 400 of the new Johnsonian volumes are already sold. Wonderful man!

I hesitate as to Valenciennes,<sup>2</sup> though I should only *survey* a camp there. Yet my curiosity is ardent. —

In all places I ever am,

My dear Sir,

Yours most sincerely,

James Boswell.

316. To the Reverend John Campbell<sup>3</sup>

Reverend Sir,

London, 26 July 1793.

Your long, intelligent, and very obliging letter upon my *Life of Dr. Johnson* gave me very great pleasure; and perhaps I should upbraid myself for not having thankfully acknowledged

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the Adam Collection

<sup>2</sup> See p 447 n 2

<sup>3</sup> From the original in the possession of the Rev. P. Campbell Gibson,

great-grandson of the recipient, who was the Rev. Dr. John Campbell, minister at Kippen, near Stirling. See *Life*, II. 28

it sooner. The truth is that I was in hopes that a second edition of my work would soon be finished, and I wished to accompany my thanks with a copy of the book to which you have done so much honour. Unforeseen delays have happened; but at length a new impression corrected and augmented is come forth, and I request your acceptance of a copy which will come in a parcel to Mr. Adam Neill, printer in Edinburgh, who will deliver it to your order. I shall, however, send this letter in the meantime, hoping that you will be so good as to excuse my seeming inattention to so valuable a correspondent

I agree with you, Sir, in regretting that my illustrious Friend's morbid melancholy darkened so much his views of religion, both with respect to himself and others. Your suggestions of a contrary tendency, and the instances which you mention are very consoling. But still it must be allowed that much depends on temperament; and also that, however severely Johnson suffered from his anxiety concerning his future state, he erred on the safe side

Your extraordinary and minute attention to the subject of my work entitles you to all the information or explanation that I can possibly give you, and it will afford me real satisfaction, if by answering the different particulars in your letter as well as I can, I shall in any degree contribute to your amusement.

It is true that Johnson received very inconsiderable sums for his two admirable imitations of Juvenal.<sup>1</sup> But we must not argue from that circumstance that the profits arising from his labours during the many years in which he 'lived by literature' were not sufficient to afford him a subsistence. Poetry is generally of less value in the *market* than almost any other species of writing; and we may be certain that the *work*, as it may be called, which he performed for Cave and others, much of which will remain undiscovered, was paid for, much dearer, when quality is considered. At the same time there is no doubt, that this great man was always in straitened circumstances, till the pension was granted to him.

<sup>1</sup> *London and The Vanity of Human Wishes.*

## Volume I.

p. 44 compared with p. 128. It is clear that I have inadvertently erred as to the date of his marriage by making it the year 1735, when it is fixed by his own inscription to have been in 1736. I have corrected this.

The variation which appears as to the date of his wife's death, Vol. I mentioning 1752, and Vol. II, 1753, is owing to the difference of the old and new style. You know the year formerly began in March.

p. 55, note. I am indebted to you for a very good hint. You will find a chronological table of his Works with distinct marks, prefixed to my second edition.

p. 97. There is no question as to the adjective *indifferent*; the doubt is whether the adverb *indifferently* can be properly used in the sense of *without concern*.

p. 269. Mr. Thrale's house in the Borough of Southwark was at a considerable distance from Johnson's own; and was so much more agreeable on many accounts that there is no wonder he spent much of his time there.

p. 190. Probably Francis Barber is mistaken as to the time of his release. I have struck out what he told me.

p. 288. I have introduced your character of the worthy translator of the New Testament into Erse.<sup>1</sup>

p. 331. October is corrected to November in my Errata. I am sorry I have omitted to mention April for May in p. 478.

p. 362. Your supposition<sup>2</sup> may also be allowed. It is, however, selfish.

## Volume II.

pp. 184, 293. Your argument is ingenious; but still the *inaccuracy of expression* must remain.<sup>3</sup> You will find Mr. Malone on the same side with you in my second edition. I have tried

<sup>1</sup> *Life* 3d ed., ii. 30, note

<sup>2</sup> Concerning the knowledge of and interest in their former acquaintances experienced by souls in heaven

<sup>3</sup> The passages concern the interpretation of the lines from Par-

nell's *Hermit*, for which see letter of 28 February 1778, above. Malone's opinion was first printed in the third edition of the *Life*, not in the second, as here implied. See *Life*, iii. 393, note.

several

several acute friends, by propounding my objection to the passage. They have all defended it in a different manner.

p. 188 Lord Trimblestown's peerage was forfeited. I have mentioned his family having suffered

p. 269. In Scotland 'Nancy' is used for Agnes; but in England for Anne

p. 280. Garrick was not so intimate a friend of Johnson as he should have been. His death was not attended with any remarkable circumstances.

p. 515. I object to reporting the phrase 'vile agents', even if used by Johnson in the heat of party spirit, because Mr. Burke was a zealous friend to him

I am sorry I did not endeavour to be informed *who* was the clergyman in the bishoprick of Durham to whom Mr David Hume owed that he had never read the New Testament with attention, as Johnson informed me.

I have thus, Sir, done my best to comply with the desire of your letter, for which I again thank you; and I shall be most ready, upon every occasion, to prove to you with what grateful regard I am,

Reverend Sir,

Your much obliged

humble servant,

James Boswell.

P.S. My *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Dr. Johnson* will also come to you, as it is indeed a part of his Life written by me.

### 317. To James Abercrombie<sup>1</sup>

Dear Sir,

London, 28 July 1793.

I have this very day received your packet, concerning your letter of 17th May; and, as a vessel sails for Philadelphia tomorrow, I shall not delay to express my sincere thanks for your accumulated favours.

I am very sorry that you have experienced any uneasiness at not hearing from me, in answer to your obliging letter of 10th October, 1792, which came safe to my hands, together with

<sup>1</sup> From Nichols, *Illustrations*, vii. 315.

Mr. Hopkinson's

Mr. Hopkinson's *Miscellaneous Works*,<sup>1</sup> and the magazine giving an account of that gentleman. The truth is, I delayed writing to you again, till I could send you the second edition of my *Life of Dr. Johnson*, which I supposed would be ready long before this time; but it has been retarded by various causes, one of which you will not regret; I mean, my having had some valuable additions lately communicated to me. The work is at length finished, and you will be pleased to receive your copy of it from the author. It will be accompanied with Mr. Young's criticism on Gray's celebrated *Elegy*, in imitation of Dr. Johnson's manner, which, I persuade myself, will entertain you a good deal.<sup>2</sup>

I think a kind of national modesty in a young race, if I may so express myself, has led you to rate your countryman<sup>3</sup> lower than he deserves. I do not mean to estimate him as a first-rate genius; but surely he had good abilities, and a wide and various range of application. I have not time to consider the writings which you have kindly sent me with your last letter, so as to give any opinion upon them by this opportunity. But I shall certainly presume to tell you in a future letter what I think of them. I shall be glad to have the curious dissertation on the elements of written language, though you mention that it contains some severe strictures on Dr. Johnson. I am not afraid. I know what he can bear.

Mr. Agutter's sermon on his death has not yet been published.<sup>4</sup> Should it appear, you may depend on my taking care to transmit you a copy of it.

<sup>1</sup> Nichols reads *Hopkins's The Miscellaneous Essays and Occasional Writings of Francis Hopkinson* (1737-91) of Philadelphia, appeared in 1792. Hopkinson, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, was a poet and essayist. His works, however, are of slight interest, as, apparently, Abercrombie informed Boswell, when he sent him the books.

<sup>2</sup> 'But I think the most perfect imitation of Johnson is a professed one, entitled *A Criticism on Gray's*

*'Elegy in a Country Church-Yard'*, said to be written by Mr. Young, Professor of Greek at Glasgow.' (This was published in 1783, the author was John Young) *Life*, iv. 392

<sup>3</sup> Hopkinson. Probably the 'dissertation on written language' here referred to was never printed. There is no such work in the collected edition of Hopkinson's writings.

Rev. William Agutter's sermon, preached at St. Mary's, Oxford, 23 July 1786, was not published till 1800.



I cannot warmly enough acknowledge the zeal with which you have exerted yourself in order to gratify me. I am very sorry that Dr. Johnson's letter to your friend Mr. Odell<sup>1</sup> is lost. But that is one of the many evils occasioned by that unjust civil war, which I reprobated at the time when a bad ministry carried it on, and now look back upon with a mixture of wonder and regret. Let us not, however, get upon that subject. I beg you may present my compliments to Mr. Odell, with thanks for his very polite mention of me. I also beg to be respectfully remembered to—,<sup>2</sup> who I am pleased to find recollects having met me at the hospitable table of my old friend, Sir Alexander Dick, who was truly a Corycius Senex. The Johnsoniana, which — has obligingly allowed you to send me, have the characteristical stamp; and I like much his expression, that 'The single weight of Johnson's massy understanding, in the scale of Christianity, is an overbalance to all the infidelity of the age in which he lived'.

You will find in my second edition, a correction of *chum* to *cham*, suggested to me by Lord Palmerston.<sup>3</sup> I am glad to have it confirmed by the letter from Dr. Armstrong; and, should my book come to another edition, that confirmation shall be added; as shall your discovery of the pun upon *corps* in Menagiana,<sup>4</sup> in which you are, I think, clearly right. You will find an ingenious

<sup>1</sup> This was the Rev. Jonathan Odell (1737–1818), rector of Saint Ann's, Burlington, New Jersey. A graduate of Princeton, he afterwards studied for orders in England, and after having been priested there, returned to America in 1767. During the Revolutionary War he remained loyal to the English cause, and from that time on, his residence in America was intermittent only. It was Odell who introduced William White (afterwards Bishop of Pennsylvania) to Dr. Johnson in 1770. See J. H. Ward, *Life and Times of Bishop White* (1892), p. 23. Cf. Boswell's first letter to Abercrombie, 11 June 1792, p. 442.

<sup>2</sup> I cannot fill these blanks. The person may possibly be the same whose name was reduced to B—d by Boswell in *Life*, ii. 207. In any case, it is probably a Philadelphian who is referred to, and one formerly associated with Benjamin Franklin, whom we know to have been a visitor at Sir Alexander Dick's and one of Sir Alexander's correspondents. Boswell undoubtedly met Franklin in Scotland, and perhaps met the person here referred to at the same time. I cannot discover that Boswell made use of the 'Johnsoniana' sent him.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, i. 348, n. 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, ii. 241, n. 3.

conjecture concerning it in my second edition, by an unknown correspondent.

I have not yet obtained from the Bishop of Salisbury the name of the clergyman to whom Johnson gave a sermon, which was preached on the fifth of November; for that, I find, was the public occasion. I will endeavour, if possible, to find it out.<sup>1</sup>

Sir Joshua Reynolds's *Tour to the Netherlands* is much better written by himself than I could do it, for it is, I understand, almost entirely an account of the pictures. It is to be subjoined to an edition of his *Discourses to the Royal Academy*, which is now in the press, under the care of that accurate critic, my friend Mr. Malone.<sup>2</sup>

By your name, Sir, you must be of Scottish extraction. May I presume to ask how long your family has been settled in America? I have a great wish to see that country; and I once flattered myself that I should be sent thither in a station of some importance.<sup>3</sup>

I am, with a very grateful sense of my obligations to you, dear Sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

James Boswell.

### 318. To Sir Michael Le Fleming, Baronet<sup>4</sup>

My dear Sir,

London, 31 July 1793.

Your kind desire to hear from me flattered me much; and I should sooner have written to you; but could not communicate what I know you would wish to know, my perfect convalescence I am not yet free from the consequences of the *villainous accident* which *befell* me,<sup>5</sup> being feeble, and not in my right

<sup>1</sup> He failed to do so Cf *Life* iv. 383 n

<sup>2</sup> Malone's edition of the works of Reynolds did not appear until 1797; it includes the work here mentioned under the title, *A Journey to Flanders and Holland in the year 1781*.

<sup>3</sup> See letter to Burke, 8 March 1778, p. 275

<sup>4</sup> From the original in the Adam Collection In the *Life* (i. 461), Bos-

well refers to Le Fleming as 'a very fashionable baronet in the brilliant world', who inherits 'with the beautiful family domain, no inconsiderable share of that love of literature which distinguished his venerable grandfather, the Bishop of Carlisle'. The letter is addressed, 'To Sir Michael Le Fleming, Bart., M.P., Rydel, Westmoreland.'

<sup>5</sup> See letter of 21 June, p. 446.

spirits. *Pourtant il va bien*. I met at the Circuit at Chelmsford our friend Bailey Heath, who desired I would present his compliments to you. Indeed, as you love your friends, your friends love you. London is, I think, emptier at present than I ever saw it. This moment I have had the agreeable news that Valenciennes has surrendered. I shall celebrate it today at the mess of the Life Guards, where I dine *soberly* as I *must* do at present. Were you in London your super-excellent Claret should flow.

The second edition of my *Life of Dr. Johnson*, (in which I have paid a just compliment by name to your honour<sup>1</sup>) is come out, and goes off wonderfully. I ever am, with most sincere regard, my dear Sir Michael,

Your attached friend and faithful  
humble servant,  
James Boswell.

### 319. To Evan Nepean<sup>2</sup>

Dear Sir,

At your House, 13 September 1793.

I am now truly in great uneasiness on account of the three poor men who escaped from Botany Bay, and the term of whose sentence has now been expired several months. They are miserable in Newgate, and I am afraid think that I have betrayed or neglected them, which you (whom I have troubled so many times concerning them) *know well* is not true. I have called repeatedly at your office, to be informed of the answer to the letter which you were so good as to write in their favour, in my presence; but you have either been so busy that I could not see you, or gone somewhere else.

As the sessions at the Old Bailey are now going on, I earnestly intreat that you will be so kind as to let me know by a note tonight or tomorrow morning whether the humanity of govern-

<sup>1</sup> See note 4 on previous page

<sup>2</sup> From the original in the Charles Roberts Autograph Collection, in the library of Haverford College, Haverford, Pennsylvania. The recipient,

Evan Nepean, afterwards Sir Evan Nepean, Bart (1751-1822), seems at this time to have been in the office of the Lord Privy Seal; he became Secretary for War in the next year.

ment will be shewn by pardoning them ; that I may be able to consider what is to be done for unfortunate men who rely upon me.

I have the honour to be

Dear Sir,

Your most obedient

humble servant,

James Boswell.

### 320. To the Reverend William Temple

My dear Temple,

London, 14 October 1793.

Your kind letter on your return home was truly consolatory to me. I have as a salvo for my indolent procrastination, thought of waiting till the long letter which you promised a few days afterwards should come, so that I might answer both at a time. But I can no longer defer sending you at least a token that I am alive and that my affectionate regard for you is constant. My spirits are somewhat better, but by no means right yet. The day after you left us a nephew of my wife's, a most deserving young man who has been fifteen years an officer in the East India's company's service, almost continually in the field, and yet only a subaltern, arrived unexpectedly, having been obliged to come home on account of bad health. He has been very unfortunate ; for he has been three times obliged to quit the country by reason of the dangerous liver complaint, and this last time he lost a very profitable appointment of Muster-Master to the Southern Army. He has not acquired above £3000. But by succession has about £6000 more ; and after such repeated warnings he must not return to a climate so hostile to his health. He is now quite recovered by change of climate. Such, my dear friend, are the disappointments to which poor mortals are subject. I do not wonder at *Franky's* impatience and piteous letters. But I find that lieutenants are made only as they are wanted for particular ships. I trust that after what Dundas said to you, your son cannot fail to be nominated soon, and that before he sails.

I congratulate you on the removal of your troublesome guests.

guests. What a shocking thing was it to treat poor Octavius as they did. You see when *love* is in the case, *other* affections give way in a daughter. You must consider your own happiness, my dear friend, while you do liberal duty to your children, as I am sure you will do. This is my own resolution, and were I to see a *proper object*, I should act accordingly, supposing I could *really* see a prospect of mutual happiness. I am sorry that the *delusion* is not yet quite gone. It will trouble your mind in many views. But I flatter myself, you will get the better of it.

It pleases me much that you think so well of my daughters; and in truth, when my judgement is clear and my temper not irritated, I think of them as you do.

My brother has had a letter from John James,<sup>1</sup> much better reconciled to Eton. Be not then uneasy about him.

I am not yet in a frame to write as I could wish to you. I can only assure you of my regret that I was so ill when you were last with me and that I ever am, my dear friend,

Most affectionately yours,

James Boswell.

Best compliments from my daughters and James.

### 321. To the Reverend Mr. Jones.<sup>2</sup>

Reverend Sir, Great Portland Street, 10 February 1794.

I return you thanks for the compliments which you have been pleased to pay me in your letter; and I cannot help thinking you were unlucky that the occasional manners of so truly great and good a man as Dr. Johnson affected your sensibility so much as to prevent you from courting his acquaintance.

You balance your disappointments and advantages in a philosophical scale, for which you may be assured most men have occasion.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your obliged

and obedient humble servant,

James Boswell.

<sup>1</sup> Two of his letters may be found in Mr. Morgan's Library.

<sup>2</sup> From the original in the posses-

sion of William F. Gable, Esq. Nothing is known of the recipient.

Dear

322. To Henry Dundas<sup>1</sup>

Dear Sir,

Great Portland Street, 17 March 1794.

Eleven years are now elapsed since I received from you a letter expressing in very cordial terms your inclination to befriend me in my views of obtaining some promotion; and during all that period in which I have seen numbers successful, and found myself entirely neglected, I trust I have given you as little trouble as any person who was flattered with reasonable hopes of your kind assistance. It is four years since I last had a conversation with you by appointment at Somerset Place; and painful as its fruitlessness has been, I have made every allowance for the multiplicity both of your occupations, and of those who press upon you from various quarters.

An occasion, however, so peculiar now offers for my applying to you, that I should upbraid myself if I omitted it. The success of His Majesty's forces by sea and land against the French and their adherents in Corsica leaves no doubt that by this time<sup>2</sup> that island is totally free from any subjection to the horrible power to which I am at a loss to give a name.<sup>3</sup> Of course the brave inhabitants will wish to form a connection with Great Britain, which certainly may be of considerable advantage to us. Whatever shall be the nature of that connection, some person must necessarily be appointed there as Minister or Commissioner or under some denomination on the

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the possession of A. Edward Newton, Esq.

The letter is addressed to 'The Right Honourable Henry Dundas, One of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, &c.' For Dundas, see above, *passim*, below, pp. 523-27, and especially Boswell's *Letter to the people of Scotland on the Alarming Attempt to infringe the Articles of the Union* (1785) in which occur repeated attacks upon Dundas.

There is, says Boswell, 'an hereditary friendship between our families. We were at College together. We have oft enjoyed

The happier hour  
Of social pleasure,

And I trust to the generosity of his feelings, that, as he *knows* he once did me a severe injury, which I have from my heart forgiven, he will be anxious to make me full amends, if ever it shall be in his power' (p. 62).

<sup>2</sup> The British navy presently brought the siege of Bastia to a close, and became masters of at least a portion of the island. Among the officers who distinguished themselves at the reduction of the fort was Nelson.

<sup>3</sup> The Convention, or revolutionary government in France.

part of this country.<sup>1</sup> Permit me, then, to offer my services, and to request that I may be recommended to His Majesty to be employed in that capacity. My knowledge of Corsica, and my having been the first man by whose means authentick information of its importance was obtained, my long and continued intimacy with General Paoli,<sup>2</sup> and the consideration how agreeable it would be to him and to the people in general, that I should be sent thither, seem, I cannot help thinking, to have such weight as almost to preclude competition; and should I be so fortunate as to be honoured with a trust which would of all be to me the most pleasing, you may be assured of my utmost attention and zeal to fulfill its duties

Should I be supposed too confident upon this subject, give me leave to refer you to Sir John Dick, whom you will unquestionably look upon to be a most competent judge, from his long residence as British Consul at Leghorn, and from his long acquaintance both with General Paoli and myself.

I am, dear Sir,  
Your faithful and  
most obedient humble servant,  
James Boswell.

### 323. To the Reverend William Temple

My dear Temple,

London, 31 May 1794.

Your fall has suggested serious and anxious thoughts indeed. In a moment, that awful separation which we so much dread might have taken place. How thankful am I that it is no worse. That you have been upon horseback again is a sign that no essential and lasting injury has been sustained.

All your packets came safely. It would have appeared better if you had divided them, and sent them by two posts. But Courtenay is very good—as a *private friend*, and as he lives very near me, I get my letters very speedily.

<sup>1</sup> This office was committed to Sir Gilbert Elliot, who was appointed Commissary Plenipotentiary, to receive, in the name of King George III, the tender of the Corsican crown.

*Annual Register*, 1794.

<sup>2</sup> Paoli was again in Corsica, where he exerted himself in behalf of Great Britain.

You

You have taken great pains in reading and transcribing such a number of illustrations, which are truly strong warnings against the horrible proceedings in France. But Mr. Dilly would not risk printing even the sermon; and the illustrations would occasion double or thrice the expence. Mr. Malone is clear that a fast sermon would not sell now. So is the Bishop of Salisbury,<sup>1</sup> whom I consulted. His Lordship said that if you, in order to do good, should print your sermon you may give it away; but that such a number of writings against the French Revolution have now appeared that a sermon on the subject would not be bought. You must console yourself with your worthy intentions and *labor ipse voluptas*.<sup>2</sup> I am shocked to hear of the scandalous conduct of three of your Cornish clergymen. Indeed every man who is not zealous against every democratical motion at present, appears to me infatuated. From what you write I am glad I saw no more of Gwatkin<sup>3</sup> when he was in town. I send you his letter to me.

I thank you sincerely for your friendly admonition on my frailty in indulging so much in wine. I *do* resolve *anew* to be upon my guard; as I am sensible how very pernicious as well as disreputable such a habit is. How miserably have I yielded to it in various years. Recollect what General Paoli said to you. Recollect what happened at Berwick.

You seem too violent against D. on account of Miss M. I have heard *alteram partem*. But I will try to persuade him to get the apothecary's bill paid for her. You must not consider her by any means as having the ordinary claims on the Admiral. The £40 annuity will, I doubt not, be certain.

The post-bell rings.

Yours ever,  
J. B.

### 324. To Thomas David Boswell<sup>4</sup>

My dear Brother,

Auchinleck, 13 October 1794.

The business of the *notes* has been settled to my wish. Though there was no indorsation, the delivery to the person to

<sup>1</sup> Dr Douglas, for whom see letter of 17 June 1791, above.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Lovell Gwatkin.

<sup>2</sup> 'Juvat ipse labor,' *Martha*, i. 107.

<sup>4</sup> From the original in the possession of C. B. Tinker.

whom



whom the annuity bond was also delivered was in truth a most fair right. He gave also £100 or better to a natural daughter. But I excuse your scrupulosity, which is amply counterballanced by your obliging exactness in the variety of matters with which I trouble you. Be so good as to give Mrs. Bruce five pounds more and Betsy a guinea, and put into the banking shop of Mr. Devaynes & Co five pounds from me to the account of the Rev. Mr. Baron at Lostwithiel, Cornwall, and write to him that you have done so. He takes charge of paying the gratuity to Mary Broad. Then let me see how our account stands, that I may not exceed my credit.

Smith, who has the claim at Edington, has not yet called on me again. When he does, I shall state to him what you write and inform you of his resolution.

Bob Preston is a fine fellow to *must* me.<sup>1</sup> But he has not the least notion of what I suffer by *remaining*. I am conscious that I can expect only temporary alleviation of misery; and some gleams of enjoyment. But these it is my *right*, nay I think my *duty* to have. It is unnecessary for me to repeat to you the unhappiness, which I unfortunately endure here. Sandy<sup>2</sup> is to take another winter at Edinburgh, and begin the study of civil law. My daughters have not yet gone thither; for we had information that Lady Auchinleck's youngest sister was dangerously ill at Balmuto, and she had gone to see her. I shall send them to pay their respects to Lady Auchinleck, before I carry them south. I am pleased to see the meeting of Parliament prorogued to the 25th of November; as I shall have three weeks more without that additional impatience which the knowledge of the town being full, and important affairs agitated, and the Literary Club &c. going on cannot but produce. Perhaps I may weather it out here till January. But I can assure you the expence of living is heavy; and we have not had any extraordinary flow of company, as I was apprehensive might be the case on my daughters coming down after being so many years absent. On Monday last, indeed, we had ten guests at dinner and all night, and on Friday we had nine at dinner. Mr. John

<sup>1</sup> That is, to assert that Boswell *must* remain at Auchinleck, whether he enjoys it or not, a sentiment which

David Boswell, no doubt, echoed as expressing his own. Cf. above, p. 374.

<sup>2</sup> His son Alexander.

Boswell's two eldest daughters were indeed of the number, they having been with us for a fortnight. The letter from General Paoli which you last sent me was for yourself, as you will see by its contents, for I now enclose it. In the packet with it were a copy of his preparatory *Address to the Corsicans*<sup>1</sup> and of the proceedings at settling their crown. I think you already have them. If not, I shall send them to you.

My son James writes to me regularly, and I observe your continued attention to him. I trust he will be a credit to us all.

I should have mentioned that the owner of the £200 note had no creditors in the just and true sense of the word. He was above thirty years ago induced to become surety for his father whose eldest son he was, and by that he lost the estate to which he should have succeeded, worth £3000. If he afterwards, out of what was but sufficient for his living, saved by parsimony, such saving was in conscience his own.

How hard is it that I do not enjoy this fine place. My daughters and Sandy join me in kind compliments to you and Mrs. Boswell, and I remain your affectionate brother,

James Boswell.

### 325. To Lady Orkney<sup>2</sup>

Lord Inchiquin's, London 22 March 1795.

My dear Lady Orkney,

Your Ladyship, I trust, recollects me at Taplow.<sup>3</sup> You

<sup>1</sup> Paoli was again in Corsica, engaged in a second attempt to establish the independence of the island. The pamphlet referred to is probably the very rare *Adresse aux Corses libres et Français*.

<sup>2</sup> From the original in the possession of A. Edward Newton, Esq. The recipient was Mary, in her own right Countess of Orkney (1755-1831), who had succeeded to the peerage four years previously. She married the Hon. Thomas Fitz Maurice, who became Marquess of

Landsdowne in 1791, and who died eighteen months before the present letter was written.

Lady Orkney was the daughter of the fifth Earl of Inchiquin (afterwards first Marquess of Thomond), who married, as his second wife, Miss Mary Palmer, niece of Sir Joshua Reynolds, in July 1792. Boswell's presence at Lord Inchiquin's is explained by his acquaintance with the second Lady Inchiquin. See letter of 29 January 1791, p. 418, n. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Taplow Court, at Chieften, Bucks,

then promised me mutton at Clifden. 'Gallant and gay' &c.<sup>1</sup>

I will have the honour to wait on your Ladyship whenever you let me know I may come.—I only say do not hastily engage yourself. I am your Ladyship's warm admirer,

James Boswell.

My address is Great Portland Street.

### 326. To the Reverend William Temple

My dear Temple,

<April 1795>.

I would fain write to you with my own hand, but really cannot,<sup>2</sup>—Alas! my friend, what a state is this. My son James is to write for me what remains of this letter, and I am to dictate. The pain which continued for so many weeks was very severe indeed and when it went off I thought myself quite well; but I soon felt a conviction that I was by no means as I should be, being so exceedingly weak, as my miserable attempt to write to you afforded a full proof. All, then, that can be said is that I must wait with patience.

But O, my friend, how strange is it that at this very time of my illness you and Miss Temple should have been in such a dangerous state. Much reason for thankfulness is there that it<sup>3</sup> has not been worse with you. Pray write or make somebody write frequently. I feel myself a good deal stronger today, notwithstanding the scrawl.

God bless you, my dear Temple.

I ever am your old and most affectionate friend,<sup>4</sup> here and, I trust, hereafter,

James Boswell.<sup>5</sup>

the residence, since the early years of the century, of the Earls and Countesses of Orkney. Clifden was planned and largely developed by George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham. Lord Inchiquin's grandmother was Mary Villiers. The house was burned in May of this year.

<sup>1</sup> Pope (*Moral Essays*, III. 306-7) refers to the Duke of Buckingham as

That life of pleasure and that soul  
of whim!

Gallant and gay in Cliveden's proud  
alcove

<sup>2</sup> Boswell wrote to this point with his own hand; the writing is hardly legible.

<sup>3</sup> Manuscript *is*.

<sup>4</sup> Manuscript torn.

<sup>5</sup> The signature is in Boswell's

Dear

327. To Edmond Malone<sup>1</sup>

Dear Sir,

Great Portland Street, 13 April 1795.

Whatever respect you and I and all who take a concern in erecting a monument to Dr. Johnson may have for the learning and abilities of Dr. Parr, I am clear that we could not be justified in adopting implicitly, without so much as having seen it, the inscription which that gentleman has written. We are answerable to the memory of our illustrious friend, to the present age, and to posterity. Let me add,—we are answerable to another tribunal, without whose approbation of the epitaph the monument cannot be admitted into St. Paul's Church—I mean, the dean and chapter of that Cathedral.

When Sir Joshua Reynolds asked Dr. Parr to furnish an epitaph, I cannot suppose that he meant to preclude even himself from all consideration and all power of objection; far less that he could entertain a notion that the other gentlemen with whom he had conferred on the subject, would be so tied up, He certainly understood that this epitaph, as in all similar cases,

hand. A postscript reads as follows:

Dear Sir,

You will find by the foregoing, the whole of which was dictated by my father, that he is ignorant of the dangerous situation in which he was and, I am sorry to say, still continues to be—Yesterday and today he has been somewhat better, and we trust that the nourishment which he is now able to take and his strong constitution will support him through. I remain with respect,

James Boswell, Jr.

This letter is followed by another, written, apparently, soon after.

8 April 1795.

Reverend Sir,

My father still being unable to write I again give you what information I can, which is only that he

continued for a considerable time since I wrote last to be in a state of extraordinary pain and weakness.

He is now, I thank God, a great deal recovered and the pain almost gone. The greatest care is taken of him. The advice of Dr. Warren, Mr. Earle the surgeon, Mr. Devaynes the apothecary, and Mr. Kingston, who has been bred up under him, have all in their different departments contributed towards the recovery.

I am, with great regard,

Reverend Sir, your obedient  
humble servant,

James Boswell, Junr.

Boswell continued to gain until his relapse on the 17th.

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the British Museum. This is the last letter in Boswell's own hand.

was

was to be subject to revision. He had before him the example of Dr. Johnson himself, who was requested to write Dr. Goldsmith's epitaph; and how did that great man conduct himself? You will find in my octavo edition of his *Life*, vol 2, p 448, a letter from him to Sir Joshua, in which he says, 'I send you the poor, dear Doctor's epitaph. Read it first yourself; and if you then think it right, shew it to the Club. I am, you know, willing to be corrected.'

I trust that when Dr. Parr reconsiders his unusual proposition he will be satisfied that, without any offence to him, it must receive a negative.

I am, with much regard, dear Sir,  
Your faithful, humble servant,  
James Boswell.

### 328. To the Reverend William Temple<sup>1</sup>

Great Portland Street, 17 April 1795.

My father desires me to tell you, 'that on Tuesday evening he was taken ill with a fever of cold attended with a severe shivering and violent headache, disorder in his stomach and throwing up. He has been close confined to bed ever since. He thinks himself better to-day but cannot conjecture when he shall recover. His affection for you remains the same. You will receive a long and full letter from him'.

I am, Revd. Sir,  
Your most obednt, humble servt.,  
James Boswell, Junr.

### 329. To Warren Hastings<sup>2</sup>

Great Portland Street, 24 April 1795.

Mr. Boswell presents his respectfull compliments to Mr. Hastings. He has ever since Tuesday se'night been close

<sup>1</sup> Although this letter is signed by James Boswell, junior, it is clear that it was dictated by his father.

<sup>2</sup> From the original in the British Museum. The letter is not in Bos-

well's handwriting, but (I think) in that of his brother, Thomas David. It is the last of Boswell's letters that has come down to us. He died on May 19th.

confined to bed with a severe and alarming fever, which has deprived him of being present at Mr Hastings's honourable acquittal, and of offering him in person his sincere and warm congratulations which he thus conveys. Dr. Warren now gives him the pleasing assurance that his sufferings are nearly at an end. The moment that he is able to go abroad, he will fly to Mr. Hastings, and expand his soul in the purest satisfaction. Considering the very powerfull influence which has been shamefully used to aid the rancorous persecution, there is no wonder that some effect was produced; but it is to the credit of the Lords that it was within narrow limits. Their appears, however, an accumulated baseness almost beyond credibility.

330. James Boswell, jr. to the  
Reverend William Temple<sup>1</sup>

Dear Sir,

Saturday, 16 May, 1795.

My father received your letter yesterday which I read to him as he was unable to do it himself. He continues much in the same state as he was when I wrote last. He is very weak, but it is to be hoped that, by taking a sufficient quantity of nourishment, he will recover strength and health. He was very much concerned to hear of the unfortunate accident which happened to you and Miss Temple and hopes that the bad effects of it are now gone off.

I am, Sir, with great respect,

Your humble servant,

James Boswell, <jr.>.

331. James Boswell, jr. to the  
Reverend William Temple

Dear Sir,

Monday, 18 May, 1795.

I am sorry to inform you that, since I wrote last, my father is considerably worse; he is weaker, and almost all the nourish-

<sup>1</sup> This and the succeeding letters regarding the death of Boswell are from the originals in the possession

of J. P. Morgan, Esq. They form a part of the manuscript of the letters to Temple.

ment he takes comes off his stomach again. He has expressed a very earnest desire to be lifted out of bed, and Mr. Earle, the surgeon, thought it might be done with safety. But his strength was not equal to it, and he fainted away. Since that he has been in a very bad way indeed, and there are now, I fear, little or no hopes of his recovery.

I am, dear Sir,  
with greatest respect,  
Yours &c.,  
James Boswell, <jr.>

### 332. Thomas David Boswell to the Reverend William Temple

My dear Sir, London, 19 May 1795.

I have now the painful task of informing you that my dear brother expired this morning at two o'clock, we have both lost a kind, affectionate friend, and I shall never have such another. He has suffered a great deal during his illness which has lasted five weeks, but not much in his last moments; may God Almighty have mercy upon his soul, and receive him into his heavenly kingdom. He is to be buried at Auchinleck, for which place his sons will set out in two or three days; they and his two eldest daughters have behaved in the most affectionate, exemplary manner during his confinement; they all desire to be kindly remembered to you and Miss Temple; and beg your sympathy on this melancholy occasion.

I am,  
My dear Sir,  
Your affectionate, hble servt,  
T. D. Boswell.

## APPENDIX I

### LETTERS OF BOSWELL RELATING TO THE ESTATE AT AUCHINLECK.

#### I. To an Agent<sup>1</sup>

Dear Sir,

London, 1 March 1786.

I have duely received all your letters. My coalwork<sup>2</sup> appears to be very well let We shall talk of Martinskill and Dickston in autumn. In the mean time let the present tenants jog on. Do not accept of a farthing less rent for Woodside than Fairlie's estimate, that it may not be said I could not get that rent after parting with William McKerrow.

I most sincerely wish you success as a candidate for being one of the Collectors of the Landtax, and you may be assured of all the support I can give you. It will not be in my power to be at the election; but I will write to every body you can point out. I will endeavour to secure Dr. Tennant for you. He has behaved to me in the handsomest manner in my canvas for the county.

It surprises and vexes me to understand that of £400 of arrears *at Whitsunday*, and £300 of bills *at Candlemas*, only £80. 8. had been remitted to my wife on the 24 *Febry*. This is shameful, and as there is pressing occasion for money, I have written both to John Boswell and James Bruce to exert themselves. I shall write to you when I have received Mr. Fairlie's letter which you mention.

With best compliments to your family I remain

Your sincere friend,

James Boswell.

I enclose a letter to Turnerhill who I doubt not will be active in going about. Seal it and send it, or deliver it. I should hope

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the Advocates' Library at Edinburgh, here printed by kind permission of the

Curators.

<sup>2</sup> The colliery at Auchinleck.

you



you will have a very good chance ; though to be sure William Logan's long services to the County will be urged. The Laird of Logan will be sadly puzzled between you. The statute money accounts are locked up in an ebony cabinet of which my wife has the key. That business may <be><sup>1</sup> clearly settled.

I have this moment yours of Febry 23. I will solicit Col. Fullarton, who I did not know was in this great city.

My letter to old Mr. Boswell I think may serve for all whom I mention in it.

I have also written on the subject to young John Boswell.

## 2. To an Agent<sup>2</sup>

Dear Sir,

London, 12 November 1788.

It is natural for you from your regard for Captain Bruce Boswell, and for your wishes for your son, to be sanguine in your expectations of his speedily getting a ship. But newspaper reports must not be credited. Poor man, he is full of hopes, but I much fear that he will find it a very difficult matter to get a ship again ; and certainly he will not get it this year. His restoration to the Company's service is a great matter. He is a worthy affectionate man and allowed by all who understand it to be a good seaman.

I am satisfied to let John Gibson have Loganston according to the measure, with the variation I have made in his favour as to the land above the brae, *viz.* 10. 12 and 15. But I insist on the two holms being one third. Let a scroll of a tack<sup>3</sup> or, as it is now so well understood, a tack itself be written out and I will sign it. *N.B.* There must be 5 pounds honeycomb, with liberty to me to plant the brae, the corner on the right hand going down the road, as also from the corner of the Craighead avenue to the march. He himself told me he had no objections.

I agree to John Wright's offer for Thensty, with the addition of two hens and four chickens, and eight loads of coals leading, and if he will agree also to 5 pounds of virgin honeycomb, the produce of the farm, or to pay ten shillings, so much the better.

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript torn.

<sup>2</sup> From the original.

<sup>3</sup> A leasehold tenure.

Let

Let John Boswell, or if you please James Bruce (dispatch being required) make out a tack in these terms, which transmit and I will sign. But he must not be allowed to enter to the farm till the tack be signed.

Will you be so good as to look at Hapland, the new rent of which I agreed with him should commence from this Martinmas. I have no objection to indulge him in having nine parks, and carrying on the mode of labour which he wishes. He says he is indifferent about having fences as he must herd at any rate. This must be strange negligence. I will make the fences, and oblige him to keep them sufficient. Pray let Mr. Halbert measure the nine divisions.

There is the farm next to it, Glenside possessed by Robert Smith, whose brother-in-law Dow (as he calls himself) at Salt-coats is to become bound for payment of what rent shall be fixed by Mr. Fairlie. I wish he could be prevailed on to take the trouble of fixing it. Perhaps the tenant may make a sufficient offer. Pray sound him.

I myself have confidently put 50 *guineas* upon Bogend, and I will not take less. I have no notion of the value of Lindsayshill. There must be kain<sup>1</sup> and leading of coals specially fixed with all tenants.

Please desire James Bruce to make out Mungo Reid's tack of his part of Hill, and park of Merlin, according to the agreement, as his plowing of the park upon my liming begins now. If he has any objections as to honey or cess,<sup>2</sup> or claims my being at the expence of clearing out some trees, he must give up the park which is to be mentioned in the tack as one of his three breaks.

There has been till very lately a road from time immemorial between the Barony of Auchinleck and the Barony of Trabock, by the ford at the old washing green and through some farms of Lady Glencairns and a part of one of Lord President's. It is at present shut up. But I am resolved to have it open; and therefore I beg you may take the trouble to look at it, and acquaint the tenants to leave the road clear; if not I will order men to remove any obstruction. I am very keen about

<sup>1</sup> Rent in kind.

<sup>2</sup> Parochial tax.

this. It is not to be expected that any gentleman will submit to have a road between one part of his estate and another turned about a mile or two

If Mr. Dowal has a majority at the election it will be no honour to him, but a great disgrace to the County. I had a very polite letter from him apologising for his not being at Auchinleck.

The man whom Colonel Montgomerie has been so good as to recommend as a tide waiter<sup>1</sup> is not *my* man. I recommend him to the Colonel as one recommended to me by Sir John Whitefoord.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours sincerely,

James Boswell.

### 3. To Andrew Gibb<sup>2</sup>

Andrew,

London, 5 January 1790.

Yours of 31 Decr I received this morning. McGrigor's story about his being prepared for payment of the bills is truly absurd. My brother told him expressly that he was to pay them at the Sheriff Clerk's Office, Ayr. If, then, upon inquiring at Auchinleck and finding them not there, he should have gone to the place of payment. If you be sure that he has told such an extraordinary story, I shall have no good opinion of him

Andrew Arnot's bill being also protested surprises me. I thought McLellan's credit had been good. I am resolved to introduce punctuality.

I left, I think, to Mr James Bruce's care a book translated from the French entitled *Neckar on Religion*. I desired that it might be sent to the Countess of Craufurd who was so good as

<sup>1</sup> Stop-gap, temporary employee

<sup>2</sup> This and the remaining letters are from the originals in the possession of James B. Gibb, Esq, the great grandson of the recipient, who kindly permits me to make use of them. The recipient was Andrew

Gibb (1767–1839), Boswell's overseer at Auchinleck Gibb was but twenty-two and a half years old when he assumed the care of the estates. He retained the position until his death.

to lend it to me, and I am vexed to be informed by her Ladyship that she has not received it. Inquire about it, in case it be lying in the house; or if Rebecha Bruce knows where it is. If it cannot be found soon send the enclosed note by the first carrier, and when the book comes, let it be transmitted to the Countess

Take good care in choosing the wood for James Dunsmoor's house, which I hope will be a comfortable one. Tell Sanders Pedin that the rent of John Hay's park which he wants is one guinea per acre. So let him judge for himself.

I am your wellwisher,

James Boswell.

#### 4. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

London, <6><sup>1</sup> November 1790.

From the account which my brother gives me of you, I am hopeful that you will act faithfully and diligently in my service, so I confirm his appointment, and I write to Andrew Dalrymple the Baron officer, to give notice that you are my overseer, but you will remember that I expect you are at the same time to be employed in labour in every way in which you can make yourself useful. I expect to receive a letter from you at least once a week, informing me what you and others employed by me have been doing. And as you have now a considerable charge for so young a man, you must endeavour to shew yourself more and more fit for it.

I am very anxious that all things about Auchinleck should be kept in good repair, and not suffer by my absence. You must therefore be particularly careful to stop all persons who attempt to pass through my parks or plantations, especially near to the old house, or the new house, or from the Whirr towards Mauchline, but see that they keep to the patent publick roads. If any persons insist to pass and accordingly do so, let me have a list of their names and I will order them to be prosecuted.

You must also frequently visit the different farms upon the estate, and mark down whether the tenants have managed

<sup>1</sup> The day of the month has been inserted by another hand.

them

them according to their leases, and when you see the houses or fences in any degree of disrepair, give notice to have them made sufficient in the space of a week, and if the tenants fail to comply, do you get it done, and take receipts from the workmen, that the expence may be paid along with the next term's rent. Lay down a determined resolution to act without partiality, or love of popularity, except what you may acquire by being just between man and man.

As for immediate particulars, I enclose a bill for £60 on Messrs. Hunters and Co of the Ayr Bank. As soon as you receive it, go and get the money, and carry £23 10s of it to Dr. Andrew Mitchell, Minister of Monkton near Ayr, having with you a fourpenny stamp, on which take his receipt. I wish this sum, being the interest of a bond, to be paid, if possible, on the 12 current. You will then give William Stothart the smith two guineas from his very dutiful son here, Thomas, for which make him sign an acknowledgement that the money has been paid to him. The remainder of the £60 you will enter in your Cash Book in which these two payments will also be marked and it will be in readiness to answer demands as they occur.

I send you also bills of which you will recover the contents, amounting in all to £67 14s as per list—and also there are four bills in Andrew Dalrymple's hands amounting to £18 14s., the contents of which I order him to pay to you, so that I reckon you will have in all, after the two payments £120 18s., which I shall direct you to apply partly in clearing some accounts paid only in part by my brother.

James Mitchell in Clewhouse wants to have a mare and foal grased by me for six months. Let him know the grassmail<sup>1</sup> should be forty shillings but I shall charge only thirty.

Let Alexander Pedin know that I wish him to have one of my parks near the village for which let him apply to Mr. Bruce Campbell, and make an offer, as a creditable man as he is, should do.

Let me know if bills have been taken for the oats in ten shilling sidewest park, and send them to me.

<sup>1</sup> Rent for the privilege of grazing.

Let the carpet which is at the church and would be spoiled by the damp be brought down to the house.

This is all from

Your welwisher,

James Boswell.

### 5. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

London, 11 November 1790.

I enclose you several small papers of which you will at once see the use that is to be made.

You must attend carefully to the instructions left to you in writing by my brother.

Shew this to John Osborn that he may read under my hand that he is to be directed by you as my overseer, in doing what he is able to do.

The maids are to have the full advantage of the milk of the black and white cow while the family is absent, but on condition that they themselves take care of her. I allow them also a reasonable supply of garden stuff.

I have made Mr. Bruce Campbell's son welcome to run a mare-sheltie<sup>1</sup> and foal in the wood; but am not answerable for its fodder.

Let James Gibson in Longlands know that I approve much of his going to Loganstow, which my brother told me may be settled between his brother and him. I do not like to divide Longlands, and the whole of it is too much for him; but I have a regard for him, and wish that he may not go off my land. His brother will do better as a weaver than a farmer.

Be sure to write distinctly to me, as to all particulars.

I am

Your wellwisher,

James Boswell.

<sup>1</sup> Small pony.

Andrew,

## 6. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

London, 30 November 1790.

I approve of your proceedings I return the bill of £73 12s. 6½d. for the West Park corn. You must sign it as drawer, and as I have indorsed it, you will get the money when it becomes due, and put into the Ayr Bank such an even sum of it, say £40 £50 or £60, as you may not have occasion for.

You must pay the cess claimed I believe the collector is almost always in the right. I am obliged to Mr. Hamilton for the delay. Let him know this, with my compliments.

I have somehow or other laid by Mungo Reid's and Mr. Halbert's accounts in such a manner that I cannot find them. The first is £9 7s. 1d. ballance, the other 2s. 6d. You will pay them directly, together with my proportion of the expence of repairing the schoolhouse of Auchinleck, also the accounts due to Hugh Hair &c, enclosed, and a small one to James Wilson Smith. You will likewise pay a ballance due on the limework at Gasswater.

You are right in getting the haystack crowned again, as it is to stand till the spring.

I have received a letter from John Osborn Shew him this, in which I positively order that he is to take his directions from you as my overseer. Let him not be obliged to work hard, and when you can send him with advantage to look after the farms and woods, do it. I doubt whether I shall have occasion for him after Whitsunday; but he shall know two months before. In the meantime, let him make himself as useful as he can.

You are right in keeping the fallen tree for uses about the place.

Be particularly attentive to let no trees be cut without first having my express orders, and keep an exact account of their number, quality, and application

I am willing to pay one half of the expence of making the fences round Andrew Dalrymple's farm of the Mains sufficient.

I expect soon to hear of your having recovered the arrears. I am

Your wellwisher,

James Boswell.

Andrew,

## 7. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

London, 16 December 1790.

Enclosed is a factory to you to receive my rents. The tenants required no authority to be shewn by Mr. Bruce; but they may object to you. You will therefore shew this to any of them who desire to see it. But you need be in no hurry to record it at Ayr, which may perhaps not be necessary. You will collect both the half year's rents and feuduties<sup>1</sup> of the village before the end of this month; but certainly by the 10 of the next, and you will take care to put what you collect into a safe place, and send every day's collection to the bank at Ayr the next morning in broad daylight. I indeed reckon that in three days the whole may be collected. On the second of February five and twenty pounds must be paid to Dr. Gillespie, Physician, in Edinburgh.

I am satisfied as to John Wallace's arrear; so let it be struck out; also William Jamieson's Paton Orra Wood I cannot free without some sort of evidence as to the grass seeds. A very slight proof will do. Inquire. Is not Hugh Reid bound to keep up his fences? James Murdock in Blackston has a very cheap farm, and must be kept strictly to the terms of his tack. My commission to you gives authority for that purpose.

Since Mr. Campbell gave James Wallace the blown down tree before he had my letter mentioning that you were to have the particular charge of the trees, should Mr. Campbell again signify that Wallace should have it, let him take it. In time coming you alone are to answer to me concerning my trees.

I desire that you may shew all respect to Mr. Campbell, and do not be elated by the trust I give you, for its continuance will depend entirely upon your good behaviour and you will have many spies upon you, I dare say.

Read to John Osborn in presence of Andrew Dalrymple what follows.

Let him have warning that he is to leave my service at any rate at Whitsunday next. In the meantime, he is to take his instructions from you, not as his master, but as my overseer,

<sup>1</sup> Rent for tenure of land.

acting



acting by my authority and if he opposes you or is guilty again of tearing off a lock, let him be instantly dismissed, and I will answer to the consequences

You must lose no time in paying McGregor's bill at the Ayr Bank and doing all diligence against him as Mr. John Boswell at Ayr will direct you. I am

Your wellwisher,  
James Boswell.

### 8. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew, London, 20 December 1790.

I have found my letter to Alexander Pedin, which I now enclose, for you to deliver.

When you have put any money into the Ayr Bank you will get a receipt to me, and transmit it, each time

I desire that you may write to me *every Saturday*, were it only to say that nothing new has happened and you will also write occasionally as any thing may occur

Put your letters now under cover directed thus, To John Courtenay, Esq., M.P. No. 55 Queen Anne Street East, London; and that I may know when to open the packet, put a B, as I now shew you, upon the outside of the cover addressed to Mr. Courtenay.

I remain  
Your wellwisher,  
James Boswell

### 9. To Andrew Gibb<sup>1</sup>

Andrew, London, 30 December 1790.

I hear that John McGrigor will pay his bill. I hope the report will prove true. Let me know I desire that you may get from the Ayr Bank, when you go to make a payment, a bill on London in my favour for a hundred pounds, for which pay down the cash.

Miss Boswell's cow is to come back again. She is to write to the maids to take care of her till she can be sold.

Tell Quinten Dun that if Tenshillingside be not taken as

<sup>1</sup> This letter is endorsed, 'From London in five days'.

a farm, the park which he now possesses is to be roused<sup>1</sup> for three years' plowing.

John Osborn being to go about the Barony inspecting while he remains in my service, I expect that you and Hugh Hair will work a good deal. I desire you may send me every Saturday a note mentioning shortly each day what you and he have been doing, and what sort of weather there has been. Do it so as not to take up much time.

Enclosed is a letter to John Reid in Thirdpart. You see my inclination towards him is kindly, and you will assist him in getting a comfortable settlement.

Let Mrs. Heughan know that I do not chuse to interfere in any way, but for my interest as landlord, and that therefore she must do the best for her own interest.

Mungo Reid's offer for the midpark of Merlin is not accepted.

I recollect no more at present; but recommending to you great moderation in your behaviour, I remain

Your wellwisher,

James Boswell.

The boxes are come safe. Let me know the state of the houses at the old place. I shall write soon to Sanders Bruce.

## 10. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

London, 4 January 1791.

I see by your last that you were to pay McGrigor's bills to the Ayr Bank as soon as you had received money enough. I hope before this time McGrigor has paid them himself.

As I am not to be at Auchinleck before the month of August nothing need be in the garden for me before that time, and then very little, as my stay can be but short. Let the ground be chiefly employed in nursery for thorns, which are needed in considerable quantities. I hope soon to hear a good account of the payment of rents.

I am your wellwisher,

James Boswell.

You began your letter 'Good Sir', which you meant well. But 'Sir' is the proper way to a master.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Let by auction.

Andrew's reply: 'I am very much

<sup>2</sup> On the reverse is a draft of obliged to you for the friendly hint

## 11. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

London, 11 January 1791.

I have received yours, enclosing Messrs. Hunters & Co.'s receipt for £39.

Mr. Bruce Campbell writes to me that he thinks the timber for the houses of Birnieknow (for that is the name and not Barglachan) will be best got in the belts about Thirdpart, and cupples and joists from amongst the oaks of Craighead Avenue; he tells me also that timber for doors is wanted for Carbello. You will see therefore that the timber be carefully cut; but you must take care that you make no plantation too thin. Rather buy wood. Let me have a note of the number of trees you cut.

I expect that you will measure land for me, when there is occasion for it.

I am offered the rent which I put upon John Hay's park; so if Sanders Pedin does not take it directly, he cannot have it. He must also pay its proportion of cess.

I remain your wellwisher,

James Boswell.

P.S. You must settle with the Ayr Bank as to the enclosed. Send my letters to them, directly.

## 12. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

London, 24 February 1791.

Your last letters appear to me to shew your accuracy, and I hope it will continue. I do not require of you to continue the state of the weather and work by you, &c., as before, day by day. But you must once a week mention both in general.

Since John Reid is to make a trial of Thirdpart upon my new plan of management, Mr. Bruce Campbell, who takes the trouble of adjusting that, will settle with him as authorised by me. The farm must be, I fancy, almost wholly in pasture for some years. Mr. Campbell will inform him what is to be done.

given with respect to the improper manner in which I addressed you and shall ever endeavour thankfully

to attend to every friendly admonition you may at any time condescend to give.'

If

If James Lapraik has imposed upon me by saying that he laid on a quantity of lime on John Hay's park, when in truth he did not, I am sorry for it ; but as I consented to his possessing it for this year, by a letter to him, there will be some difficulty. I desire that you may tell him what I have heard, and therefore that as he obtained my consent on a false pretence in case I am rightly informed, the consent is not good, so it will be safer for him to let Sanders Pedin take possession directly. If he will not agree to this, let him know that if he plows more than one half of it, I will take care that he shall repent it. If I had not thought that James Hay was to give up his claim in favour of James Lapraik, I should not have been so hasty.

You will let Mrs. Wilson in Clews know that the cheese ordered by Miss Euphemia may be sent to Lady Auchinleck without delay. When the parks are roused, James Mitchell will have an opportunity to bid.

I am sorry for what happened at Walltrees. I should have adverted to the change which took place on my settling with Darnel as to the cess. Remember it in time coming.

Send me every month a state of your receipts of money for me, and disbursements. Mention articles as high as £5. Throw the rest together as *Sundries*. But let them be separately stated in your book.

Pay John Bryden his account for weaving.

Let Sanders Pedin know what I have written as to the park.

I remain

Your wellwisher,

James Boswell.

### 13. To Andrew Gibb

Great Portland Street (Observe I  
live here now, and not in Queen  
Anne Street, West),

Andrew,

30 April 1791.

Your last letters have come safe. It will be very right to have the hayseed sold. From a letter from Mr. Grieve at Muirkirk to Mr. Bruce Campbell, I observe that the iron company  
has

has commissioned 1,000 stone at 6*d.* delivered there and will perhaps take 1,000 more. You must therefore be very active in getting carts to take it to them at a penny a stone, which will be some advantage to the tenants in the way of employment. I mentioned before that you must send me a bill for the price. Enclosed is a letter to Mr Shaw, which you will forward. I find Andrew Dalrymple behaves very ill. He must not be spared. Let the bull calf be sold.

I remain your wellwisher,  
James Boswell.

#### 14. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

London, 4 June 1791.

You have done very well as to the cattle and sheep; and you will remit the proceeds by a bill, that I may distribute the cash.

As to Andrew Arnot, he seems to be in woeful circumstances. But I incline to indulge him so far as not to sell his cattle, and in short to try if he can recover.

As to George Paton, I am sorry to see him falling back so. He has a cautioner<sup>1</sup> for five years rents and if he does not pay up equally with the rest, I mean his Whitsunday money rent and Candlemas meal, let him be proceeded against, and if he fails to pay, proceed against his cautioner. But do not deal harder with him than with others; I mean let his Martinmas rent remain unpaid till I come home in August.

Let me add as to Andrew Arnot, that if he suffers his cattle to trespass, and if there be an appearance of much debt to others besides me, his stock and crop should be secured for my behoof.

I think John Lindsay in Kilburn a good man, and therefore accept of his proposal of six pounds for the grass crop, with liberty to dig the yards so far as not in grass. This is, I believe, about his old rent; for he paid one rent to me and the other to the original tenant's widow.

However ill Andrew Dalrymple has behaved, I relent, and

<sup>1</sup> Surety.

you will act in terms of my note at the foot of his letter, which I enclose.

Let Archibald Steel know that I cannot judge of his case till I see his farm. But neither he nor any one else upon my estate has reason to fear that I will be a hard master.

I recollect no more at present, but remain

Your wellwisher,

James Boswell.

### 15. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

London, 1 August 1791.

This comes by my eldest son, to whom you will pay all proper attention. He will direct as to the berries. I hope to be at home myself on the 24 or 25 current.

Your sincere wellwisher,

James Boswell.

### 16. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

London, 28 November 1791.

I have not been well since I came to London, which is the reason that you have not heard from me sooner.

I am sorry that the Auchinleck colours are locked up in a cabinet which cannot be opened in my absence; otherwise I should with pleasure have lent them to the Beneficial Society.

I enclose the account for bleaching, which I took to Glasgow with intention to have paid it. You must pay it as soon as you can.

I am afraid that my proportion of the Sorn expences will be found just. Calculations of that kind are seldom erroneous.

I agree with you in thinking that the widow in Thirdpart may not do as we could wish. And therefore if she does not sign an agreement of reference to men mutually chosen, along with David Murdock who comes after her and is bound to keep the houses and fences in repair, application must be made to the sheriff. You will observe that it is necessary to make David Murdock a party, so that there may not be *two* estimates, or *two* disputes.

Be

Be sure to watch the encroachments of the water of Lugar in all places, as also to take care that Mr. Alison's cattle do not trespass

Let Adam Currie fill up the plantation on Hudston farm, provided he gets cocking for the dike from Lundrum. I am not sure whether the tenant be found for that dike. I think he is. But I shall pay Adam whether I get it from the tenant or not.

Write to me weekly and put your letters now under cover of John Courtenay, Esq., M P, London.

I remain your wellwisher,

James Boswell.

Let Adam Currie have a fir for a bed

The bill by Paton's has been mislaid. They will, I doubt not, pay without it.

## 17. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

London, 24 February 1792.

Your letters of the 8th, 11th, 13th and 16th current are lying before me, and I shall now answer such particulars as seem necessary.

Farmhouses, I find, are very expensive to the landlord if not carefully watched. I think it right that there should be a new steading at Orchyard, if the present cannot be sufficiently repaired and, as the tenant is a substantial man, it is reasonable he should join in the expence if he is to have the advantage. Wood for the roof I take to be a heavy article; but I will pay that equally with him. Braehead houses will, it seems, cost a great deal. There is no help for it. I wish I had a good tenant for that farm.

By all means let the harvest wages be paid to Andrew Arnot's shearers, without any process.

Unless the Minister of Sorn can shew the quantity of victual stipend which he claims from me, in his decret of locality, it clearly cannot be due; so the decret should be the rule, unless he can point out any mistake.

I am sorry to see so many arrears; but as I am not so strictly punctual as to the first half year's payment, you will just take  
payments

payments from them gradually, taking care however to urge them from time to time, and if any of them are in bad circumstances (except John Wright, with whom I am to have patience) you must do diligence.

By a letter which I have had from Mr. Dun I hope you have got the run of water settled with the Miller of Bridgend.

As to the cotton scheme at Templand Quarry, I do not well understand it; but as I wish to encourage what the Auchinleck feuers<sup>†</sup> think is for their advantage I agree to their building as proposed and I allow them five guineas for lime and wood.

I shall certainly not be home before August. Hugh Hair will therefore act accordingly as to the crops in the garden.

The tuck at Cumnock must be repaired in a sufficient manner so as to keep the water off. I should think it may be done for four or five pounds.

If Mr. Bruce Campbell has not made any bargain as to Kilburn with any other man, I agree to John Lindsay's offer for one year; but he must not plow one inch of it. Let him sell his dung. Take from him a letter for one year declaring that if he possesses longer without my consent, the rent shall be twenty pounds yearly in grass and, for each acre plowed, seven pounds.

I am clear that the piece of ground taken by William Murdock will keep a cow, if well managed.

Your account is very distinct. But you should have sent me the bank receipt for £150.

I am afraid that my entail accounts of expence of improvements for twelve months preceeding last Martinmas may be too late, for it must be lodged *within six months from the term of Martinmas*, that is, on or before the 12 of March and signed by me. What you must do, is to make out an account in which you state me debtor to you, as per the sundry articles paid to different tradesmen &c., and grant a receipt to me for the whole on a stamp. Have it ready to give into the sheriff clerk's office in due time with your receipt as voucher, but also send me a copy to be returned signed, which yet may be done by dispatch.

I remain your wellwisher,

James Boswell.

<sup>†</sup> Tenants.

Andrew,



## 18. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew, London, 14 March 1792.

Yours of 27 and 29 February and 3 March are before me.

I have received the Ayr Bank receipt for £150.

You are right as to taking what men will allow for repairs to Rogerton houses, which will go in part towards building the new ones.

I will allow wood for the roof of a house to John Dinsmore, provided he is at all the rest of the expence.

In making out the account of improvements yearly, you must include the wood as if purchased by you and grant receipt for the whole. If the price which it would bring me be stated, it comes to the same thing. I see from the Act of Parliament that the account and vouchers must be lodged within *four months* after Martinmas; therefore in future let us be in full time. Send me a copy of what you have now lodged, that I may sign it, which, though a mere form, is proper.

You may thin the ashes at the foot of the inclosure; but do not touch what are on the Old Castle.

Tell Miller Smith that I hope he will not be unreasonable as to the run of water; but let it go as conveniently for all concerned, as may be

I think it is right to carry forward the belt of Rogerton planting, and to straight the march as proposed.

I do not like John Murdock's selling the half of his fen. In case of sale a year's real rent must be paid to me.

I have no doubt that the march, with Mr. Alexander in the Traboch, is properly straighted.

I do not chuse to sell my house in Ayr.

Remit £40 to account for me to Mr. Robert Boswell, Writer to the Signet, at Edinburgh.

I am your wellwisher,

James Boswell.

P.S. I have just now received yours of the 10th. I wish to know particularly the lands as to which there is a deficiency of my valuation as to the payment of road-money.

I am pleased with your state of the trees for planting. But  
I wish

I wish to have many more willows intermixed. Mr. Fairlie of Fairlie was so good as to say that he would let me have a number. Write to him in my name, that he may be pleased to order them to be cut and sent, and you will pay the men employed.

I do not interfere with the Traboch tenants. At any rate, I cannot fen in that barony.

Does John Young intend to build on the rood of lands you mention?

I cannot agree to any stones from my quarry being carried to Cumnoch. If any such practices are attempted, be sure to stop them.

I am glad that a process is going on against Miller Brown. I am resolved that the tacks shall be strictly observed, and I desire you may attend particularly to this.

#### 19. To Mr. Alexander of Ballochmyle<sup>1</sup>

Dear Sir,

London, 9 June 1792.

Andrew Gibb, my overseer, having by my orders taken a particular inspection of the place where the water of Air is injuring the holm of my farm of Willockston, his report to me is as follows: 'The whole of this is owing to Mr. Alexander's quarries overmining the rock on the opposite side, in consequence of which it has fallen into the watercourse, by which it has been in a manner stopped altogether, untill by forcing its way against all opposition, it has run off about 11½ falls of good land from the holmin; and if the stones are not removed or a great expence of tucking made on this side, much more will go off by next winter.'

This, you see, neighbour, is a serious grievance; and as I cannot be a fair guardian of the property of my family or defend myself against a just complaint of my tenant, if I do not obtain due redress so far as it can now be had, I am to request that you will be so good as to order these stones to be removed, and that not by halves or imperfectly, but in that sufficient manner in which I know all your works are performed.

I enclose this letter to my overseer, with directions to him

<sup>1</sup> Not in Boswell's handwriting, the letter is doubtless a copy of the original made by Andrew

to inspect again and report from time to time till the business be done, which I flatter myself will be begun without delay and completed while the weather is fine.

Please let me know that you will comply with my request ; because if we should differ as to the reasonableness of it, no time must be lost for having an umpire to decide betwixt us. I trust that there shall be no occasion for this and at any rate that it shall in no degree effect that cordiality which I value not a little I ever am,

Dear Sir,

Your faithful humble servt ,

Signed, James Boswell.

My two eldest daughters and James, who are now at home with me, join in best compliments to you and Mrs. Alexander, to whome I beg mine may be presented. My eldest son was well when I last heard from him He is to be my proxy at Auchinleck next autumn, when I am to be at the Land's End.

## 20. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

London, 6 August 1792.

This will be delivered to you by my eldest son, who is to be my representative this year, as I am to be in Devonshire and Cornwall. You will pay all attention to him, and let him have what money he asks for. On receipt of this you will pay on my account five guineas to old William Stothart, the smith, being a present to him from his worthy son Thomas, who is in a very prosperous way. My son brings Peter Murdock's tack, signed by me

I remain

Your wellwisher,

James Boswell.

## 21. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew.

Chelmsford,<sup>1</sup> 2 October 1792.

I have been upon a very long journey into the western parts of the Island, and have only *passed through* London, so to

<sup>1</sup> Boswell had been at Chelmsford for the Assizes

speak,

speak, to get to this capital of the County of Essex, upon business.

You must now have collected the rents due some at Candlemas by the new sets, and some at Whitsunday by the old. I hope the tenants have paid regularly, and that you have lodged a good sum in the bank at Ayr.—I shall now expect from you an accurate account, with the particulars of each who has failed to pay. You must write to me once every week. I remain

Your wellwisher,

James Boswell.

## 22. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

London, 12 October 1792.

I have received yours of the 5th current, enclosing a receipt from Hunters & Co for £330. But this appears to be but a small payment after a half year's collection. You will therefore send me a distinct state of accounts, and remember the annual account between you and me must be settled in proper time.

If you think that George Samson's cattel will not hurt the trees at Blacklinhole, I agree to his proposal. But as I wish to take great care of the trees there, particularly the elms, I would not have them anyhow injured for the value of 25s., so you must be very attentive as to this ; and if there be the least danger do not suffer it.

My demand for Dalblair is £120 with the taxes Let James Wear be asked what he will give Be sure to recollect that if another man takes the farm, he must also take James Wear's stock. When you have treated with them, inform me.

David Arthur has written to me to know if I will let him have his farm at a gross rent the *first* year like the rest You will see by his bargain that he has had full time to prepare it for the arable rent by liming, to keep him to his agreement.

I have received proposals from Robert Reid for his farm at Drumfork and from Mungo Reid for Martinshill. I shall write concerning both of them to Mr. Bruce Campbell, the day after tomorrow, being Monday. I am afraid of the expence of putting

Martinshill

Martinshill in order for an arable farm I certainly will not make more than three enclosures of it. I remain

Your wellwisher,

James Boswell.

A bill of mine for £50 which you took to the bank at Kilmarnock must be paid when due

Let me have an accurate rental for this year, that I may see what I have to expect.

I am very sorry for Mr. Dunn's illness. When it pleases God to remove him, it will not be easy to supply his place.

James Wilson in Clewhouse must furnish butter and cheese as usual; and I wish to have rather more butter for my brother than came last year.

### 23. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

London, 22 October 1792.

I am sorry I did not mention to you the interest due to Miss Jeany Boswell being on my bill to her for £90. You will therefore call on her without delay and pay her £4 10s. and take a stamp with you and get a receipt. Make my compliments to her, and tell her she may depend on punctual payment as long as I keep the money.

The agreement with Thomas Campbell for Bogend is by no means a distinct bargain, if one year only be considered, and nothing is said as to his giving any repair at all to the houses. His bargain is for nineteen years; and it is a pity that the making out of his tack was delayed, for he would have been clearly bound, had that been done. As things are, he must certainly either hold to his bargain or be liable in some damages. I myself fixed the rent of Bogend, and I am not afraid of getting it. But a good tenant must be found, and in this and every other case, when a bargain is fairly made, the task must be extended *directly*. You must apply to Mr. Bruce Campbell for instructions how to act as to Bogend.

You have done very properly with James Wear. I recollect nothing as to not seeing him *destitute*. Will your uncle now make a distinct offer to me of £120 yearly with publick and parochial

parochial taxes, taking the houses as they now are and being bound to keep and leave them in sufficient tenantable condition ; also to James Wear's stock at a valuation by men chosen by James and him, and in case I chuse to plant any part of the farm that I may have the ground not arable at two shillings per acre ?

My son alarmed me about the new road to Catrin, as if it had been injurious to my beautiful holm. But it appears to me from your drawing that it has cut my holm as little as it could, except at one corner, where if I understand right an angle of my holm is disjoined from the rest. Now I think the fairest way would have been to have carried it upon Professor Stewart's ground after it crossed Whiteflatburn. I see it is carried in a particular way, in order to meet one of the streets of Catrin village. But I have nothing to do with that ; and I desire you may let me know if *much* of my holm be disjoined at the corner ; because if that be the case, I must object, as the ground so situated would be useless. If it be but a trifle, I can put a few trees into it.

Worthy Mr. Dun's death affects me a good deal, though he was long infirm. I shall be in no hurry as to providing a successor to him, which is a matter of great moment. If the people be wise they will be in no hurry neither in *fixing* on one whom they would like. My sincere wish is to have a comfortable settlement.

I remain

Your wellwisher,

James Boswell.

## 24. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

London, 13 November 1792.

As your uncle, I understand, is a good man, I will not differ with him for £5 yearly. I return his offer to be signed.

I return Wallaceton's offer not accepted. I thought the widow in Mosshouse was to continue. If she does not, a tenant must be found, for I do not like to throw farms together and depopulate the country.

I approve

I approve of your proposal to put a constant day labourer into Burnhouse.

I am sorry that the road to the church is grown so bad. In summer it may get some gravel by the tenants working a day ; but the carters who travel upon it should assist. In the mean time, let the small bridges be repaired.

The letter of the Session to Dr Erskine is well expressed. But it is better it was not sent, because I should be left to find out a good minister, which I am very anxious to do. Both Dr. Erskine and Dr. Andrew Hunter wrote to me in favour of Mr. Lindsay. Tell John Stirling I am much pleased with his letter, and shall answer it. It is my intention to come down some time in winter or spring to converse with the parish, and let them have a Pastor to their mind as well as my own.

It appears to me that Mr Alexander has cut my holm too much. When I see it, I will judge whether the road should not still be altered.

I do not chuse to purchase the multures<sup>1</sup> of Laugh Mill which affect my lands. I never thought multures the burthen which many people do ; and in the way that I settle with my tenants as to that article, they may often be gainers.

How is old Johnie Wyllie ? Give him a crown from me, as a kindly remembrance.

I am glad that George Halbert and John Black are in the way to bring up their arrears. I am sure I wish well to my tenants, and to the best of my knowledge would let them have reasonable bargains.

My brother says he had not so much butter last year as the year before. Pray let that be remedied. Could you send some honey ?

I remain

Your wellwisher,

James Boswell.

<sup>1</sup> Tolls of grain or flour paid to a miller.

## 25. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew, London, 5 December 1792.

This day the four boxes have come to hand. But they are not yet opened. I return the disposition to Elizabeth Marshall, with my approbation at the foot of it, so that the rent may be taken separately.

Send the enclosed to John Stevenson.

Let my son at Edinburgh have what money he desires ; and when you can spare twenty pounds pay it to Mr John Boswell at Ayr, *to account*

I hope fires are put on in the house as often as necessary. But indeed I have great confidence in the care of the maids.

I remain

Your wellwisher,

James Boswell.

## 26. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew, London, 18 December 1792.

I am much pleased with your attention to the exchange of land proposed by Admiral Stewart. Some time ago Mr. Bruce Campbell wrote to me about it ; but I did not understand it, and by his last letter it was to be delayed till Christmas. Be sure to get the best information whether there be really coal and lime on the march, and let me know without delay the *day* on which a copy of the Admiral's petition to the sheriff was delivered, and indeed if you have it, you may send me a copy of the *execution* or words of the service of it.

I enclose answers to two different applications jointly from members. Inquire as to the state of the coalwork, and the reasonableness or unreasonableness of raising the price ; and be sure to exert yourself and see the coal-road be in good repair.

Tell Mungo Reid, he seems to me always very hasty. If he thinks he can get a good bargain from Lord Dumfries, I shall have no objection to his taking it. At the same time I am very willing he should continue in my land, and if he must have a considerable farm, and he is not provided for when I come down,

I shall



I shall be ready to make an agreement with him upon reasonable terms which I always wish to do.

What does John Stirling mean by apprehending commotions?<sup>\*</sup> Bad people attempted to raise them here. But the wise and worthy majority have united so firmly that all fear is over. In case any seditious deceitful writings have been dispersed in our neighbourhood, I send you two little sensible pamphlets which you may lend, and some copies of *Judge Ashurst's Charge* and *One Pennyworth of Truth* which may be posted up in smithy's and lent about. Paste one of *Judge Ashurst's Charges* in the office that all the tenants may see it. I cannot yet fix the precise time when I shall come down. I hope the end of next month.

I remain

Your wellwisher,

James Boswell.

Take a copy of my answer to Alexander Pedin and send it to me. Let me know all you can as to any discontents.

## 27. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

London, 24 January 1793.

The way that one of my letters to you came to Kendal was that I had no frank and enclosed the letter to Sir Michael Le Fleming to whom I was writing by that post, and Kendal is his post-town.

Your letters of 17 December and 5 and 19 January (the last of which enclosed receipt, Hunters and Co., for four hundred pounds on my account) are now before me. I have not been well; otherwise I should have answered sooner.

I shall shortly but sufficiently answer now.

Your state of the limeworking is very distinct. You are right in thinking we may depend on John Dinsmore, therefore I desire you may agree with him.

See that the blowdown trees be taken care of.

Sell the mare I got from James Wallace if you can get a reasonable price for her; nay, even for what she cost.

<sup>\*</sup> That is, as a result of the French Revolution

Attend strictly to the trespassers on the plantations. For once you may accept of the expence of mending the dykes. But afterwards if they continue, prosecute for the penalties.

As to the price of the coals I shall, when I come down, endeavour to adjust in what I think a fair manner for all parties.

I cannot think that Mr. Alexander will prevail in taking the post round. If the matter be now in agitation, let a petition be sent to the Postmaster General at Edinburgh for me and the inhabitants of the parish of Auchinleck, stating the hardship and opposing it. I myself will apply at the post office here.

If Lord Mountstuart continues to hunt on my lands, and leap over the fences with his attendants, write a very respectful letter to him, saying that you have mentioned it to me, and that I request his Lordship may be pleased not to do so any more. But unless he does considerable harm, I would not wish that notice should be taken of it. Only if any fences be hurt, application should be made to his Lordship for indemnification.

I am very sorry for the death of William Lennox. He was a worthy creditable old tenant for whom I had a regard from my earliest years. I hope his son will do well.

Poor Hugh Hair must not work too hard. I shall be glad if he continues better.

The fall of a great part of the old house, though I regret it as an old acquaintance does not surprise me. It is happy that it did not happen when any body could be hurt by it.

My brother, who is much pleased with you, will be glad to hear from you.

I hope to be down some time next month. As my stay can be but short, I will employ all my time in the business of the estate, and in concerting a worthy successor to Mr. Dun. Some of the people did send the letters signed Alexander Pedin to Dr. Erskine. What do the people now talk as to the settlement? Let me know privately. I remain

Your wellwisher,  
James Boswell.

## 28. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

Glasgow, 23 March 1793.

You will take a copy of the enclosed, and deliver it to Robert Reid. Fairlie has quite determined me. If Mr. Brown does not close directly for Braehead, I am off. So let him know. It is a condition that I am to enclose and plant the *whole* of the brae above the holm, I mean *largely*, as also where the wood was cut. Be sure to plant more oaks in Willockston Brae, lose no time in filling up Rogerton and Rodinghead plantations, and enclose and plant with various kinds of trees the little triangular piece of ground at the corner of Mr Smith's park of Knockroon. You will remember my authority to state your wages at twenty guineas. I remain

Your wellwisher,  
James Boswell.

## 29. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

London, 31 May 1793.

A thousand things have hindered me too long from writing to you; and I am not certain when I wrote or what letters are unanswered.

Yours of 11 April enclosing a bank receipt for £150 lies before me. The road from Barloch to Drumforth must be made, half at my expence.—My house at Ayr must have a lighter roof.—I am not for a wooden bridge at the Haugh; at least I will not give all the wood for it.

As to yours of 10 May I am glad Burnhouse goes on so well. Let Sandie's mare be sent to Fullerton's horse.

As to yours of 18 May, I am to make the garden wall at least 18 feet high, and to line it with brick. I will inform myself as to particulars, and then send my orders. I doubt if I shall have it done this year. Does Robert McCrone foolishly continue resolved to give up his farm?

Tell the widow in Weelside to make herself quite easy. The tack excludes subtenants, assignees, nay all adjudgers.<sup>1</sup> The creditors therefore can have nothing to do with it; and as he has

<sup>1</sup> Persons appointed to make judicial awards.

deserved

deserved it, I will remove him, and she and her son Daniel shall be continued. How has the poor creature William ruined himself?

Let Adam Currie have another fir tree.

Apply to the factor for Lady Auchinleck (Mr. Rankin, Clerk to Mr. Robert Boswell) to compel the Trabock tenants to keep their fences in repair, where bound. Where *not* (I mean as to plantations) let it be *constantly* done at my expence. I am glad you have got the sheltie. You must ride actively about.

Find out somebody near the Templand Wood to take charge of it.

I readily agree to slate Braehead house. Mr. Brown must pay out the expence, deduct it from his rent, and thereafter pay me interest which should be 6 or 7 per cent. But we shall not differ.

I am sorry for David Murdock's heavy losses. Be easy with him.

How is my young Muirland filly thriving?

John Boswell never writes me a word about the progress of the settlement of Mr. Lindsay. Do you get distinct information from the Rev. Mr. Peebles, Presbytery Clerk, and let me know *when* the call is to be moderated, that I may write to the heretors for their *concurrence*.

Let Margaret Gibson have David Moodie's park.

Next month I am going abroad on a tour to Holland and Flanders and to pass some time with the combined armies.

I have written to Mr. Bruce Campbell, and I now write to you that I doubt whether it be not too late and also a bad time at present to sell Knockroon Wood. But I am determined that, be it too young or whatever other objection there may be, the wood at the Manse shall be sold out and carried off *this summer*. So get what you can for it. If there be any very fine trees, leave six or eight standards especially close to the manse. I will have the wood cut and led off, while the church is vacant.

. I remain

Your sincere wellwisher,

James Boswell.

P.S. 3 June. Now that the road through my land to Catrine is finished, let the bridge be built at my expence. Mr. Alexander pays half the expence of the road. But I pay the whole expence of the bridge, which, I hope, will not be great. It, however, must be done in a decent manner.

Andrew,

## 30. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

London, 20 June 1793.

I return you the estimates for Braehead, which come very high. Let Mr. Bruce Campbell be consulted Mr. Brown thought there were two<sup>1</sup> many houses; I think so too The stable may be let down and the Cothouse turned into a stable, unless he chuses to repair one of them at his own expence. He must pay  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. if I slate the dwelling house.

Baillie Gebbie talks nonsense about the Manse Wood. It shall be cut younger next time if I live.

Open Mr Hunter's letters, and send them to Mr John Boswell.

I remain your sincere wellwisher,

James Boswell.

## 31. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

London, 3 July 1793.

I have no objection to building a dwelling house at Kilburn; but let it be at a moderate expence.

It pleases me much that the people of Auchinleck are so grateful for my providing a worthy minister for them. But let them know with my kind compliments, that I disapprove of any publick acknowledgement Let it be amongst ourselves, and happy shall I be if many years hence, they are as much satisfied as at present.

My sons are set out for Edinburgh, and I hope will be soon at Auchinleck. I shall take good care of myself on the continent. I remain

Your sincere wellwisher,

James Boswell.

## 32. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

London, 14 August 1793.

I am sorry for the failures which you mention. We must look sharp at present. As Andrew Arnot, I am afraid, will never be able to pay the rent of his farm, and would be much better

<sup>1</sup> See.

as a day labourer with a horse and cart, I desire that if he does not appear to be in the way of doing well, you may proceed to secure as much as you can for me, and another tenant must be found for Lindsayshill. There must also be another tenant found for Longlands. I suppose one must also be found for Gibston as I cannot agree to lower the rent of it. You will now be preparing to collect my rents. I shall expect to hear how you go on. I am satisfied with the bargain as to Bridgend Woods.

My son James informs me that a calf given to him by his mother has been sold. You will pay him the price.

I remain your sincere wellwisher,  
James Boswell.

### 33. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew, London, 9 September 1793.

In my last I omitted to answer that part of your letter which relates to Brackenhill houses, which from the account you give of them must undoubtedly be repaired before winter; and as a byre must be built, I would have it made such as will suit a steading of houses for the farm. In case it shall appear that the other houses are so bad that it will cost a good deal to repair them so as they may stand during the lease, I would do no more to them than is absolutely necessary to make them habitable, and build new ones next summer. As the farm is small, the houses need not be so large as those in general which I have built. It is my intention to build excellent ones for the other side of Brackenhill, which will make a stately farm.

I am longing to have a state of your collection of my rents, and how accounts stand. I remain

Your wellwisher,  
James Boswell.

Let the return of servants and horses be sent to Ayr, and see that all my taxes be regularly paid.

I wish to see my rental for crop 1793.

Andrew,

## 34. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

London, 25 September 1793.

I have received yours of the 12, enclosing Ayr Bank receipts, one for £80 and one for £40. I am concerned to hear that the tenants pay so slowly, and that markets are very dull. You must get my rents in as well as you can ; and as for Andrew Arnot, John Black, and John Wright whom you think in a bad way, you must proceed against them, and not suffer them to become more and more in arrear.

You tell me a substantial grazier wants to know if I will let him Longlands in the way that John McGregor had it, that is, one of the fields at a time to be in tillage, and Burnsdale in grass. I can have no objection if he be a good man and will either reside at Longlands or<sup>1</sup> himself, or have the houses possessed so as to be kept in constant repair, as the fences must be ; but the lease must be only for nine years, and I must have four pounds more rent upon the whole than McGregor was bound to pay. The whole must be let as one farm ; only the lease will specify that one of the Longlands fields is to be plowed three years alternately. Mention the grazier's name.

I am surprised that you never ask me what trees may be cut. You must surely have occasion for a good many. But I told you that you must have my authority for what you cut. You must be particularly careful not to thin any of the plantations too much ; and in short write to me always for particular instructions as to the cutting of trees.

You must see after Templand Wood with great care, as it is very valuable. Any part of it that requires enclosing should be attended to without delay. I expect you will be strict as to keeping trespassers out of it. Let me know exactly in what state it is.

I remain your wellwisher,  
James Boswell.

<sup>1</sup> *Sic.*

Andrew,

## 35. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

London, 12 December 1793.

I have received yours of 25 November and of the 7th current, with the different enclosures. The rental is very distinctly drawn out. My brother has discovered only one mistake which is in valuing the honey at £3 2s. 6d. when it should be £3 15s.—I observe that you state Turnershill at £40 5s., and then give allowance of £6 12s. for multures. This makes the rental higher than it really is. You should therefore state it thus <sup>1</sup>—multures deducted £33 13s. John Shaw's cow being a temporary burthen is properly stated as an *account*. It gives me much uneasiness to see so very large an arrear. When my brother received my rents for me, there was not £30 of arrear. To allow tenants to fall behind is ruinous to them. I am aware that £25 on Dalblair cannot be reckoned as the tuppark claim will take it off. Also that I consented to delay of Quintin Dun's £20 7s. 3d. and that you have security for what is due by McGregor and George Halbert. But the arrear on Carbello no less than £50 16s. is shameful and no time must be lost in doing what you can to get it in. I wonder at James Johnston's not having paid. You will let him know that he *must* be punctual; also at John McBirnie who has his possession at a very low rent. A general remark I have to make on a number of the articles; there are arrears of various sums of no great amount. I therefore order that as full indulgence is given in point of time, there must henceforth be no partial payments taken, but all the tenants must be warned, that if they do not bring the full half year's rent due when the time of payment comes, decret <sup>2</sup> will be passed against them, and disagreeable proceedings follow. As they have many months after the half year's rent is *due* to prepare for its *payment*, they must be accustomed to exert themselves and be accurate. Now remember this general and positive regulation. At the same time, when there have happened unforeseen misfortunes, I would not be rigid. Take care upon receipt of this letter to call in directly all the small arrears. How could you let the tenants in Dernlow be in

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript, *thus*.<sup>2</sup> Decree.

arrear?



arrear? I suppose Andrew Dalrymple has an account to meet his arrear. Send me a copy of it, that I may examine it, before you allow it

Let the £25 mare and the pieball poney be sold without delay. Though the mare should bring two or three pounds less than the cost, it will be more advantageous than keeping her, which is very expensive in winter. Let my grey filly be sold when ploughing time begins

I enclose a note to George Irvin to let Miss Jeanie Boswell have the room at Knockroon which she wishes for.

I do not recollect the terms of the exchange between my Father and the late Lord Dumfries. The paper is locked up at Auchinleck I think it very probable that coal is reserved. In the mean time James Dinsmore has my consent to search for it near Cumnock, provided he satisfies the tenants in the lands.

Barnsdale park and the one lately possessed by James Swan must be roused for next season in grass, and then James Wilson and Robert Steel will have a fair opportunity with others to bid

I cannot imagine what so many boxes of such weight as you mention to be sent can contain. You will let the maids know that nothing must be sent from the house without an order under my hand.

Send me your cash account. Put it in parcels, and let them come on different post days following, so as there may not come too many parcels at one time. I remain,

Your wellwisher,  
James Boswell.

Go on vigorously against Miller Brown. Take care that he be warned to remove forty days before Whitsunday previous to the last Martinmas in his tack.

### 36. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew, London, 13 December 1793.

In my letter of yesterday I omitted some things which I am now to mention.

Let a separate account be kept for Knockroon, as I intend that

that what I receive out of it shall be applied towards sinking what remains due for the price of it, a part of which is a bond for £600 to the Ayr Bank. You will therefore get in the arrears on Knockroon directly, and pay the full year's rent to the bank, taking a receipt *in part payment of the principal of my bond for £600*. The *interest* will always be settled in my cash account. Knockroon must not be included in the Auchinleck rental. You must see the leases upon it, observe that the conditions are performed, attend to the state of the houses, and let me know how long the leases have to run. If the road from Knockroon, which has been shut up by Lord Dumfries, be not opened in the course of this month, I shall send you a petition to be presented to the sheriff.

You must remember to pay on the first of January to Rebecca Bruce at Cumnoch five pounds on my account, which it is my intention to pay her annually. Also pay for me five pounds to the minister of Auchinleck, to be distributed among the poor of the parish. Send four bolls of meal to John Shaw and let me know of any particular objects of charity.

Send me a list of the poultry payable by each farm.

Give me pointed information whether each tenant has laid on the quantity of lime which he is bound by his tack to do. This must be strictly attended to, and when they fail, an example must be made in terms of their tacks. Care must also be taken to have the houses and fences inspected; and if they be in disrepair the provision in the tacks concerning them must be followed without relaxation. In short, no estate can flourish where the tenants are not kept to steady order and regularity.

I allow the unhappy man William Johnston his feu rent in charity.

Let the little corner left out in the enclosing of Knockroon on the side of the high road, be enclosed and planted in the spring.

Let me know how many acres of Tenshillingside House Park have been limed.

I hope you take due care to prevent trespasses by roads which are not allowed. Inform me as to this article. No road must be suffered by the old house, unless upon occasions when it is

asked and granted as a favour, and no road to Mauchline must be suffered within the planting and enclosures.

I hope I shall soon have a bank receipt sent to me

Give old John Wyllie a crown from me.

I am your wellwisher,

James Boswell.

Why did you send me Alexander Dunbar's assignation to David Cuninghame? I return it. I shall write soon about James Wyllie's account and Mungo Reid's desertion of his possession, on which I was at great expence in building houses which are too good for a taylor. Send me a copy of Mungo Reid's tack. I hope he cannot throw it up.

### 37. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

London, 10 January 1794.

By a short note yesterday I mentioned to you that I had by mistake written *bolts* instead of *pecks* when ordering a gratuity to John Shaw, and I desired that if you had said nothing of it, you should give *pecks* as I meant. If otherwise the mistake should be concealed. Poor old man!—though the gift be too large, it would rejoice his heart.

I cannot understand your fears as to payment of rents; for surely corn is higher than usual, and I should think cattle as high. I hope soon to have better accounts from you. I wrote to you before not to proceed to extremities against any of the tenants except such as you are sure are desperate. I wish not to be a hard landlord. But I am clear that allowing them to run in arrear is ruinous to them.

I return the minute of tack to Mungo Reid, which not being stamped will not bind him for the eighteen years; but it will bind him at least as much as a verbal bargain, and as he possessed so long he could not throw up his farm without renouncing it in due time and form. Therefore I still hold him as tenant, and I desire you may call upon him for the rent; or indeed it will be better all at once to send the minute to Mr. John Boswell, and let him give in a petition to the sheriff for me, setting forth what has passed, and that as Mungo had deserted  
his

his possession, he should be ordained not only to pay what rent is due, but to return to his possession, or pay such damages as may be found due for repairing houses and fences. I observe that James Bruce has omitted to bind him to lime before plowing; so that he has got a great advantage over me by having cropped the limed park of Merlin. I shall get rid of him with as little loss as may be; and against Martinmas next must find another tenant for his possession, and previously to his entry have a proper tack on stamped paper.

Andrew Stirling must have a tack before he takes possession. So let a scroll of one be sent to me. There will be some difficulty as a third of Longlands has been partly cropped. But that can be adjusted.

I recollect David Arthur's having formerly disputed obstinately as to having one year lower in rent. But Mr. Bruce Campbell who made the bargain with him, shewed me I think that David was in the wrong. Let his offer be looked at, and Mr. Campbell be spoken to, and the arrear may lie over till I come home.

Mr. Campbell must also settle the Dernlaw dispute. It is very unreasonable to ask cocking. But if promised, there is no help for it. Care must be taken in time coming to avoid such claims. I wish the irregularity in the tillage of that farm could be remedied.

Orchard's case is as clear as the noonday and I desire that you may proceed against him without hesitation.

It was exceedingly wrong in James Wear not to reserve his rent out of the £600 he got for his stock. You must not let his rent lye over, for fear of accidents.

I shall be glad to see your particular state of the culture of each farm, and particularly of the liming.

Do not delay to send me the state of the year's improvements on the estate prior to Martinmas last, that I may have full time to revise it, and prepare it for being lodged before the 12th of March.

Mr. James Johnston must be insisted with to clear his rent.

From what you state as to Hugh Goldie I am convinced he will not be able to keep his possession. You must get his rent as well as you can.

As

As to planting,—considering the great expence I have been at last year upon the estate, I intend to do very little this year. The little corner at Knockroon may be planted in the spring Braehead plantation must wait. I do not remember what ground is to be planted below the Mains Put me in mind of it.

I remain your wellwisher

James Boswell.

### 38. To James Morton, Mason in Auchinleck

James,

London, 4 February 1794.

I should be glad to accomodate you to your wish But I am resolved not to let Mount upon a lease till I have myself viewed and considered it well, and made it so rich that it shall bring a guinea an acre I have limed it at the rate of about 100 bolls an acre and not a hoof has been upon it all last season. Next summer it is to be roup'd for pasture. Whatever can be done for its advantage shall be done. It is a beautiful spot, and I have a conceit to make quite a garden of it.

As Mungo Reid quits his possession at the Hill of Auchinleck, where there is a good house already built, I think that might do very well for you But I must have a higher rent than he paid Or if you would wish to rent more land than his possession, we may perhaps agree on a lease of the park lately possessed in grass by James Swan, provided you build a house upon it, as William Dalrymple who had a lease of it was bound to do. You may consider of these two possessions, and what rent you would offer per acre, you being obliged to liming at your own expence.

I am your friend,

James Boswell.

### 39. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

London, 26 February 1794.

Your two last letters, one written in haste without a date, and one dated at Ayr on the 19th current are now before me, to be answered in the order of their contents.

I enclose a letter to the Rev. Mr. Lindsay, which you will read,

read, seal and send, or deliver. I cannot give an answer to James Dalrymple concerning the Quarry park till I hear from Mr. Lindsay. Who is James Dalrymple?

I am truly concerned to see so numerous a list of my tenants who have not settled for the half year's rent, which they should have paid to you early in January. But you must be in a mistake in mentioning that half year as due at *Martinmas* 1793; for in that view I should be insisting to have the rent for crop 1793, a great deal too soon. I mean only to have the *first* half year's rent of each crop or year early in January, and the *second* in August or early in September when there is a clearance for each whole year. By the old tacks the terms were Whitsunday and Martinmas by equal portions; and in that case I expect the rent *due* at Whitsunday to be paid before the end of the year, or early in the next year, and the rent due at *Martinmas* to be paid about Lammas. By the new tacks the terms are Lammas or Martinmas (which is it?), and I expect the Lammas or Martinmas rent or what *was* the Whitsunday rent, early in January and the Candlemas rent in August or early in September. In short that each crop shall be cleared before another is begun to be cut down. You must take care therefore and not insist for *payment* beyond one half year, though it is proper to take decret for *all* that is due, as I observe from the list, you mean to do; for I see each tenant is charged with at least a whole year's rent. If indeed any of them are in very bad circumstances, such as Andrew Arnot, there is no help for it; in such cases the usual indulgence cannot be allowed. I am angry at Mr. James Wallace's delay, as I meant him a favour when I let him Blackroft. Archibald Steele has no excuse, considering what work we gave him lately in road-making; and George Paton having a large *district* very low rented, ought to be among the foremost payers. But you will attend to one circumstance—he has a Galston Laird cautioner for him. Mr. Bruce Campbell knows of this. The Knockroon tenants must be kept strict. I formerly mentioned to you that the rent of that little estate is to be kept in a separate account; but I will not trouble the Ayr Bank to receive it separately. The way must be—Take the rent of Knockroon and add to it as much out of my other rents

rents as will make £100 and pay that to Messrs. Hunters and Co. to account of my bond to them for £600. Let me know how the Bridgend Wood has sold, and if you have paid my bill to the Rev. Mr Millar of Kilmaurs Also whether it will be right to roup Knockroon Wood this year.

Miller Brown, I am satisfied, has behaved in a most unworthy manner, and I shall not listen to him I am sorry that he has not been better watched But as he has so shamefully violated the conditions of his tack, and as there should have been one third of the farm six years old lea at the end of it, I think the sheriff should prohibit him from breaking up any part of the few acres that are of that age, that at least there may <be> a little remaining.

You say you have not informed John Shaw as to the other *boll*, you mean *load*. So I have done enough for him this year. Give old James Brown four bottles of Mountain wine, and a shilling a week beginning with the first of this year; so he will have something very consoling to receive at first. Inform me more about Janet Vallance. In the mean time give her a crown.

Send to Mr. John Boswell at Ayr, two years interest on a bill of mine to his father for £97 8s. and 11d. of date 4th October 1791, and get his receipt,<sup>1</sup> mentioning that he has marked the payment on the back. Mungo Reid must be prosecuted as I formerly wrote, and removed. Mean time, oblige him to pay up all his rent that is due. Let him not be indulged with half a year's rent in his hands. He has behaved very ill. His carrying off the fodder will certainly not be suffered. Am I not right that he has taken advantage of me, and plowed my well-limed park of Merlin, at a low rent? I am resolved to have every right in his case that the law allows me. He, as you observe, speaks very absurdly when he proposes I should give him a year's rent to give up his bargain. As the minute excludes assigneys and sub-tenants, he must either possess it himself, or be removed. I hope you have sent the minute to Mr. John Boswell with instructions to raise a process.

Mr. Alexander has written to me in so earnest a manner about

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript repeats the phrase.

allowing

allowing the road to cut a very small part of Catrinholm, that I cannot refuse him ; so I have agreed. But upon condition that I am to be at no more expence, and that the tenant is to be satisfied. I have at the same time mentioned your proposal of cutting the burn through the corner of the Professor's holm.

I remain

Your wellwisher,

James Boswell.

Mungo Reid after having had the advantage of plowing the park of Merlin, should have thankfully resigned his minute when he resolved to go to a farm of Mr. Gray's. If he is now willing to give it up directly, putting the houses and fences in repair to the satisfaction of a new tenant, and paying what two men shall fix, on account of his carrying off the fodder, let him go in peace. If not, let him be prosecuted as far as law and justice will allow.

You will observe that old James Brown is to receive his shilling a week since the first Sunday of this year, all at once ; and thereafter he is to have a shilling paid to him each Sunday, for the week ensuing.

#### 40. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

London, 7 March 1794.

Yours of the 1st current was not sent to me till it was too late for me to write by yesterday's post. I now return your correct copy of the account of entailed improvements for 1793, and hope that by the course of post it may reach you on Tuesday the 11 or early on Wednesday the 12, so as on *that* day it may be lodged at Ayr, with your voucher or receipt on a stamp. In case the former copy be lodged, Mr. Murdock the Sheriff Clerk, (to whom give my best compliments) will, I am sure, have no difficulty to let this be exchanged for it. Pray be as alert and exact as to this as may be.

Miller Brown, I am resolved, shall make me a just indemnification for his shameful abuse of my farm.

Mungo Reid is also one of whom an example must be made, so far as the law will allow. Let a process, as I formerly mentioned,



mentioned, be raised against him, and if possible let him be removed, as having deserted his possession. Send me a copy of his minute, that I may have clearly in my mind what is to be done. I remain

Your wellwisher,

James Boswell.

I can give no answer to young Campbell till I get clear of Mungo Reid. He shall not have one farthing for giving up his minute

#### 41. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

London, 27 March 1794.

I am now to answer your letters of the 5, 10 and 19 current.

By a letter from Mr. Bruce Campbell I have been informed that he was to be at Auchinleck to pass decreet against tenants in arrear, and have it enforced by Hill the messenger. I hope nothing too severe has been done. From your account of David Murdock in Thirdpart, I am willing to have patience with him till midsummer. But he must be strictly inquired after. It is clear he would be a very unfit person to have a lease of the farm when it comes to be regularly let. A proper tenant should be looked for in good time.

I have had a letter from young Wallacetown, to which I enclose an answer, which you will read, seal, and send. I am not as yet prepared to give a regular lease of Blackroft, which mention to Andrew Hunter.

I am glad you have an interdict from the sheriff against William Brown. His letter produced in the sheriff court is a very strange one. Can he suppose that any body will believe he was so ignorant, when he was taking such advantages? The procedure must not be stopt. I must have a decreet for the full sum of additional rent in consequence of his *chusing to deviate* from the obligations in his tack; and then I can act as I see best.

I do not incline to feu the ground opposite to Alexander Johnston's house

There is a bank of wood at Whiteflat which you will sell by roup without delay, as I understand it is *not growing better*,  
and

and a fence must be made at the bottom of it along the new road. I intend that the ground on which it stands shall be properly enclosed again to give it the chance of growing again. .

I think my son's mare need not be sold now, as she may soon be put to grass, and I intend to be at home in June, when she may be of use to me. Tell Hugh Hair to have some things for the kitchen ready.

Mungo Reid has got a great advantage of me. Let him never again be employed to work for me. But I approve of what you have done as to my being free of him.

I return William Campbell's offer for Hill &c, with the terms on which I am willing to agree with him, which, if you think him a proper tenant, you may communicate to him; if not, you may inform him that I do not accept of the offer. I do not desire caution.

I am surprised that I have not yet received your annual account of cash received and disbursed. Do not delay this, and let me then have it every fortnight. The next hundred pounds which you can spare must be remitted to me, as the last £200, by a branch of the Bank of Scotland, and not put into my cash account at Ayr.

I remain your wellwisher,  
James Boswell.

How did Bridgend Wood sell?

## 42. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

London, 12 April 1794.

Last night I received yours of the 7th and am surprised and offended that I have not along with it your account current for last year which I ordered long ago, and have been expecting with impatience. I desire that you may not write again without sending it. To keep clear accounts and let me have a constant view of the state of my affairs in the country are of the greatest importance. I am also much disappointed<sup>\*</sup> with your state of the effects of the baron's decret<sup>2</sup> enforced by the presence of Mr. Hill the messenger. Mr. Bruce Campbell wrote to me that

<sup>\*</sup> Freehold estate.

'it had the desired effect and he did not believe £10 were unpaid'. You say 'they got ten days to settle—but some of them seem to have forgot; but you are hopeful to be able to give a good account of them by and by'.—This, you must see, is letting things be quite loose, and taking away the effect of the baron decret enforced by Mr Hill, and encouraging the tenants to imagine that they may trifle.—Therefore if they have not cleared before you receive this letter, I desire that you will proceed to poid,<sup>1</sup> unless where you can give me a satisfactory reason for delay. Also let due intimation be made to them, that I myself am to collect the halfyear's rents payable the beginning of September, and that I will not allow of arrears.

The manse estimates come to a great deal of money. If I recollect right, the manse and offices at Mr. Dun's settlement came to no more than £100 with the materials of the former buildings. But 40 years ago labour was at half the price it is now. I shall not object to my proportion, however, and I am glad that the heritors so handsomely agree to accomodate our minister comfortably. I shall write to Mr. Lindsay soon. In the mean time, present my compliments to him, and let him know that he may immediately take possession of the Quarry Park, which he wishes to have, and he and I will settle the terms of a lease.

I shall be upon my guard as to the Iron stone at Gosswater. Nothing must be done concerning it, till I come down.

Thomas Guthrie in Drumfork must not be suffered to plow any part of his sowndownland, till it has rested the time fixed by his lease. I gave that liberty to James Macmillan because his was land not sufficiently broke. If the hay be not very good, the pasture may be better.

I enclose a new letter to young Wallacetown.

I am pleased to hear you are planting the braes below the mains.

Remember when you have sent last year's account, that I am to have every fortnight a state—as also a view of what expence you foresee.

On the 15 of May £180 of interest is due by me to Craigen-gillan. Can you have it ready?

<sup>1</sup> Seize, distrain.

If James Wilson has a right to George Halbert's crop for this year before the date of the £30 bill, he will be preferable. If not he will have trouble. He should as you say have taken proper steps before advancing his money. I remain

Your wellwisher,

James Boswell.

### 43. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

London, 9 May 1794.

Your account of charge and discharge from 28 October to 30 April last, inclusive, seems to me very distinct. I am at a loss only as to one article, viz. : ' April 14. Cash Mr. Alexander per order 30.18.' In other places it is clear that by ' Mr. Alexander ' you mean my son. But as I have not observed your having payed Mr. Alexander of Ballochmyle my half expence of the Catrine road, I imagine that this article may be on that account. If so, you should have distinguished it. As I wish to spare John Wright and let him have a fair trial in his farm, and indeed am very unwilling to proceed to extremities against any of my tenants, I agree to accept of the bill by him and his brother for £10, rather than rous his effects now.

I really do not recollect my agreement with James Wear for the privilege of the crop of Dalblair. I should think I must have marked it in my memorandums of the business of the estate.

So poor old James Brown is dead. He was a good man. My kindness to him is a comfort to me now.

I mentioned to you in a former letter that I had £180 of interest to pay to Craigengillan on the 15 of this month, and wished to know if you could have it ready. You have omitted to say anything about it. But I see from your account that you could not. I shall write to Messrs. Hunters and Co. concerning it. But do you without delay pay in £30 to them on my account. It will be better if you can pay in double that sum.

I am not a little uneasy to observe that my interest of £70 due to Sir William Forbes and Co., on the 9 of March, has not been paid, because I am much obliged to them for a loan of £1,400, which I have had from them for years and therefore wish

wish to be most punctual. I shall make an apology to them, and get the matter adjusted properly.

It was very necessary for me to stop improvements that would have brought expence on me this year. I observe that the expence of church and manse will be £20 less than the estimate.

Continue to send your account regularly every fortnight. I remain

Your wellwisher,

James Boswell.

Do not let Mount in grass till you hear from me. Might it not remain as it is till the middle of June, when I hope to see it?

You must pay no money for the defence of the country without my orders.

#### 44. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

London, 2 February 1795.

We got safely to London, since which I have received two letters from you.

I wish James Bryan had taken £32 for the chaise horses; but he had not authority to sell them. That offer, however, fixes their price; and I must have it, or at least 30 guineas. I do not approve of your going to Glasgow to take the chance of selling them and the mare, for which I must have 20 guineas. I think David Murdock who sold me them, may get them off for me. You must find out what price the lad Arthur sold the poney at, and get the half of what it was, more than 6 guineas. I never agreed that there should be a delay till my return.

I left six bottles of Mountain standing in the family bedroom, for Miss Jeanie Boswell, which if not yet sent to her you will take care to send. She is to have from me instead of my bill a bond of annuity for £9 to commence in October next; I shall make it out and send or deliver it to her in due time.

I agree to allow William Clark £5 to do the work proposed, provided you see it is effectually done.

John McCowan must not have his rent demanded till you hear from me again. But he must undoubtedly be prosecuted  
for

for his shameful trespasses in Templand Wood. If I get a decret against him, I can use it as I please to bring him to a proper settlement.

Let me hear regularly from you, with distinct accounts of every thing.

I remain your wellwisher,

James Boswell.

I am glad our parish has gained such honour on the ice.

Tell Terry Watt to kill two of the turkies, and send one to Lady Auchinleck and one to Mr. John Boswell at Ayr. The cock, an old hen, and a young one must be kept.

#### 45. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

London, 23 February 1795.

A strange accident has happened. Being hurried at the time when I received your last letter, I opened it, saw that it contained something about the storm, and that an account of cash received and disbursed accompanied it. Without reading more, I put it in my pocket and went out. Some thief picked my pocket of my handkerchief and of your letter along with it. Therefore, by return of post you will supply the want of it as well as you can.

Send John Shaw a load of meal. Or rather let him send for it. Also let the unfortunate man Thomas Speirs have one, and send him my note.

I remain your wellwisher,

James Boswell.

#### . 46. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

London, 2 March 1795.

I have only time today to tell you to give for me five guineas to the Kirk Session of Auchinleck and as much to that of Mauchline for the poor. John Shaw has need of all his meal this year. Give Nelly Boswell a crown. She should spin. You may also give her five pecks of meal. Your accounts of the  
inclement

inclement season are shocking. Let all sheep be accomodated as much as my dale lands will allow ; and I hope my tenants will not be unwilling.

I remain

Your wellwisher,

James Boswell.

#### 47. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

London, 19 March 1795.

I recollect my engaging to let David Murdock have Third-part another year, and William Smith, by agreeing to it, relieves me from a difficulty between them. But David must clear his *third* year's rent and preceedings, which he would have been obliged to do though I had been bound by a lease for another year. On that condition and on his not plowing one inch, I agree, and Wm. Smith shall have the next two years in grass to prepare. But I am not to build any part of the houses till next year which, by this bargain, will be the same as the present year.

Mungo Reid has had too much. I will not allow him a farthing more. If he chuses he may prosecute me on the unstamped decret or rather the *irregular addition* to it, and I will defend myself. I am sorry the decret itself is lost or mislaid. Knowing I am right and just here, I shall be positive to the utmost.

I will not agree to William Campbell's giving up his possession of Hill for this year at so late a time unless a good tenant can be found to pay the same rent on the same terms ; and he shall be answerable to me for the rent, should that not be the case. They are a troublesome family.

Hugh Caldou may have the ground he desires at 10s. an acre this year and 12s. for each of eight years more.

If the Haugh Millsucken had persisted to object to the report, I should have proved *by witnesses the state of* the dam, at the expiration of Finlayson's contract. I shall be aware of any proposal as to a new dam of unnecessary expence.

The planting of Braehead Bank must not be delayed. Considering the hard weather, it can be planted later this season.

You

You are always thinking of the *hands* whom you engage. I think of having my work done no matter by whom, except that fellow Mungo Reid. Therefore send for Adam Currie and let him sleep in the house and get any other ditchers from the village or any where else; and at all events let that business be executed without delay. Remember it is to be all ash and larix.<sup>1</sup> The ash must be at such a distance as to have room to be trees, and the larix between them to be cut in due time. At the same time I would have a proportion of ash to be cut for hoops. Exert as to this: and let the *hands* help partly there and partly fill up other plantations.

Miller Brown's absurd process against me is dismissed.

I recollect my former orders as to the two turkies.

Has Hugh Hair planted the fruit trees which I ordered?

Poor Patrick Lennox died the night before I left home.

If you had mentioned to me that you wished to go and visit your brother I should readily have agreed. But I do not like the roundabout way which you took. Hugh Hair's going with David Murdock was quite enough; and a pretty adventure you had of it. Henceforth I desire to have from you once a fortnight a daily short note how you have been employed, such as James Bruce kept. Any reasonable jaunt shall be allowed you when you ask it.

Mr. James Rankin may send me a letter for his uncle.

I remain

Your wellwisher,

James Boswell.

David Cuninghame owes me a pair of shoes, which I agreed to accept as his entry for his house.

#### . 48. To Andrew Gibb

Andrew,

London, 27 March 1795.

I had ordered Mr. Smith the prunings of Knockroon Avenue for cocking his new dike before I spoke to George Irven. Therefore he must undoubtedly have first what is sufficient for that purpose, and George may take what remains.

<sup>1</sup> Larch.

John



John Donald, being the eldest son, has the best claim to his father's park. So deliver my letter to him. I have no doubt it would be agreeable to his *stepmother* that *her* son should be preferred. But that is not agreeable to me. I am glad to see from James Donald's will that he has died in good circumstances.

I must be more cautious as to promising wood. But I shall always be liberal as well as strict in performing any promise I make. So let Robert Wallace in Orchard have it as you suggest.

If you cannot get the green behind the house limed this year in time for its being plowed, let it be well limed and lye upon the sward. You must not put any of the dung upon it ; nor let any of it be used except for the garden. I shall not be down till August. So Hugh Hair will judge what he should sow.

Cannot the piece of ground called the New Garden be dressed so as to be in clover this year ?

I am your wellwisher,

James Boswell.

## APPENDIX II

### BOSWELL'S POEM TO JOHN WILKES.

*For the noted Wilkes.*<sup>1</sup>

Specimen of 'Parliament, a Poem'.

. See, incited by the same desire,  
The Laird in Scotland and the English Squire ;  
Her sway Ambition spreads from south to north,  
On banks of Severn and on banks of Forth.  
To serve my country half my land I'd give—  
Not to be member, freinds, is not to live.  
Who at his seat contentedly would stay ?  
Who would not be in great Preferment's way ?  
Who'd grudge the money at Elections spent ?  
A Place is not too dear at cent per cent.

Let *Bamber Gascoigne* a whole Ox prepare  
And 'mongst the Poor it's roasted quarters share ;  
Let little *Gairlies* make his Voters swim  
In tubs of Ale till Judgment's eye grow dim,  
And an Attorney, vers'd in nice chicane,  
Might for *Tom Thumb* the maudlin Borough gain.  
Let other Members purchase other votes,  
Some give false promises and some false notes,  
By merit only let my *Dempster* stand  
And still be number'd with the chosen Band.

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the British Museum.

## APPENDIX III

### SUPPLEMENTARY LETTERS

#### 106a. To Lord Loudoun<sup>1</sup>

My Lord,

Edinburgh, 18 April <1771>.

I beg leave to recommend to your Lordship's humane and charitable protection, the bearer of this, John King from the parish of Auchinleck, but of late residing in St. Quivox. He is an old soldier, who lost one of his eyes in America; and last winter had the misfortune to have the other beat out with a stick. So that he is now stone-blind. Before this last accident, he was able by his industry and his Chelsea Pension to support an aged mother, a wife and two children. But he is now reduced to a very unhappy state. He goes to London to solicit an augmentation of his pension, as he formerly served in the artillery. I hope your Lordship's goodness will assist an old soldier and a Shire of Ayr-man.

I have the honour to be with very sincere respect, my Lord,

Your Lordship's obliged humble servant,

James Boswell.

#### <148a. To Sir Joshua Reynolds><sup>2</sup>

Dear Sir,

Edinburgh, 12 August 1775

An historical picture of Mary Queen of Scots resigning her crown, painted for me by Mr. Hamilton at Rome, is soon to be landed at London from a ship from Italy. I should wish to have

<sup>1</sup> This and the three later letters to Lord Loudoun are from the originals in the possession of Henry E. Huntington, Esq., of California.

The recipient was John Campbell, fourth Earl of Loudoun (1705-82), who had been Commander-in-Chief in America in 1756. Boswell and Johnson called upon Lord and Lady Loudoun in Ayrshire in the month of October, 1773. In the *Tour to the*

*Hebrides* (p. 372) Boswell pays a magnificent tribute to the Earl, as one who 'did more service to the county of Ayr in general, as well as to the individuals in it, than any man we have ever had'.

<sup>2</sup> From the original in the possession of Rupert Colomb, Esq. Cf. letter of 18 December 1773, p. 197. and *Life*, ii. 280.

the picture in your next exhibition, if you approve of it. May I beg, then, that you will receive it into one of your rooms in the mean time, as I do not know where I can place it, in a proper manner, but under your roof. Messrs. Dilly, Booksellers in the Poultry, are to receive the picture from the ship. Will you be pleased to let them know if it may be sent to you? Or if that is not convenient, will you be so good as give directions where it may be lodged any where else?

The subject of the picture is a very good one. Dr. Robertson<sup>1</sup> has described the scene very well; and Dr. Johnson favoured me with the following inscription for a print from the picture.<sup>2</sup>

|                                      |                                  |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>Maria Scotorum Regina,</i>        | Mary Queen of Scots              |
| <i>hominum seditiosorum</i>          | terrified and overpowered        |
| <i>contumelivis lassata,</i>         | by the insults, menaces          |
| <i>minio territa, clamoribus</i>     | and clamours                     |
| <i>victa,</i>                        | of her rebellious subjects,      |
| <i>libello per quem regno cedit,</i> | sets her hand,                   |
| <i>lacrimans trepidansque</i>        | with tears and confusion,        |
| <i>nomen apponit.</i>                | to a resignation of the Kingdom. |

I will be much obliged to you for your advice and assistance in this matter. I beg you may present my best compliments to Miss Reynolds,<sup>3</sup> and be assured that I ever am, with great regard,

Dear Sir,

Your most obedient  
humble servant,  
James Boswell.

### 177a. To Lord Loudoun

My dear Lord,

Edinburgh, 30 October 1777.

I reached this place last night half an hour after six, and found that my wife had been worse than I imagined, but was a good deal better, and I hope she is in a fair way of recovery.

<sup>1</sup> See the *History of Scotland* (1759), i. 375.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson's inscription was not used when the picture was engraved in 1786. The print has the legend, 'From the Original Picture Painted

for and in the Possession of James Boswell, Esq<sup>r</sup>. of Auchinleck. Published Jan<sup>y</sup> 2<sup>d</sup> 1786, by John Boydell Engraver in Cheapside, London'. It was engraved by Francis Legat.

<sup>3</sup> Frances, the painter's sister.

I enclose

I enclose the political letter which I promised to endeavour to get for your Lordship. There is a good deal of truth in it; and it is in general written with force and keenness<sup>1</sup> of style.

This day has been excessively wet, and the harvest in the east seems to be much later than in Ayrshire

I write tonight to Sandie Cuninghame to inform him of your Lordship's goodness in undertaking to negotiate the purchase of an ensigncy for him in a good regiment, and that I am to hear from your Lordship when a vacancy occurs. In the mean time, the money shall be ready for lodging whenever your Lordship shall direct.

I beg to have my most respectable compliments presented to Lady Loudoun, and I have the honour to be, with very great esteem,

My dear Lord,

Your Lordship's

much obliged and faithful humble servant,

James Boswell.

#### 179a. To Lord Loudoun

My dear Lord,

Edinburgh, 19 January 1778.

It is with much unwillingness that I trouble your Lordship so often about Sandie Cuninghame. But the poor lad is so uneasy and anxious in his present idle state, that I cannot but feel for him, as he writes to me very earnestly.

Every thing considered, it appears to me more adviseable to purchase for him an ensigncy in an old regiment than to get him into one of the new ones upon the usual terms; and I would beg that if possible, his commission may be obtained immediately. Your Lordship's goodness will pardon my importunity; and I should wish to know if it could be of any service, were I to write to any of the agents in London of my acquaintance, to be upon the look out. My wife is a little better, and joins me in most respectful compliments to your Lordship and to Lady Loudoun. I have the honour to remain

Your Lordship's faithful humble servant,

James Boswell.

<sup>1</sup> *Sic.*

## 191a. To Lord Loudoun

My Lord, Edinburgh, 8 February 1779.

I have this moment received a letter from Cornet David Cuninghame of the Greys, who complains that great injustice has been done him by putting two gentlemen over him when he was eldest cornet, and he begs that I may apply to your Lordship in his behalf. Your Lordship's interposition here will be adding another favour to the account of

Your Lordship's

much obliged

humble servant,

James Boswell.

P.S. As I know not his address at present I trouble your Lordship with the enclosed.

207a. To <Henry Dundas<sup>1</sup>>

My dear Lord. Edinburgh, 20 April 1782.

If I was ready to renew our old hereditary freindship some time ago, I should be much readier now. Your Lordship is the son of President Arniston, and the grandson of Sir William Gordon,<sup>2</sup> with both of whom my father was in the most cordial intimacy. My grandfather was indeed in great freindship with your father. From my infancy I have been educated with these good impressions; and while I saw the freindship between our families continued, I hoped it should last for ages.

After my father had long ceased from politicks, and after I had with his permission warmly taken the side of the ancient and respectable interest of Ayrshire, Your Lordship knows who prevailed with him to make extraordinary exertions in favour of a candidate who "*upstart*", a candidate, who, however plausible, had certainly given me reason to have a shabby opinion of him, in a little pecuniary question, which he has

<sup>1</sup> From the original.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Dundas was son of Robert Dundas of Arniston, Lord President of the Session, by his second wife, Anne Gordon, daughter of Sir William Gordon of Invergordon.

Boswell addresses Dundas as 'Lord' because he was at this time Lord Advocate, an office which he occupied till August 1783. For Boswell's relations with him, see above, pp. 353, 356, 365, 390, 420.

since refused to submit to the arbitration of your Lordship. I was thus not only thwarted in my general wishes for old interest in elections, and crossed in personal antipathy, but rendered insignificant in my own county.

I appeal to your Lordship's own feelings, which I can fully trust, if all this was not hard to bear, at the best time of one's life? It was the harder that I was altogether dependent on my father, with a wife and children. And was there any wonder that it should estrange me from your family?

After years of unnatural distance, which I could not help regretting from my heart, I was fortunate enough to become convinced that politicks was the strongest poison to the human mind, and would insensibly instigate excellent men to do very wrong things. I excused your Lordship's ardent ambitious conduct. I upon my honour forgave you, and with all sincerity I renewed that social intercourse which should never have been interrupted.

I depend upon our old hereditary freindship, I depend upon that generosity of spirit which prompts to make reparation to those whom we have any way injured, (I indeed depend much upon this in your Lordship's breast) that henceforth you will be disposed to give me your kind assistance, and, what I shall highly value, your able advice in my endeavours to obtain promotion, of which I flatter myself I shall not be thought less worthy than others.

I have the honour to be with real respect,

My dear Lord,

Your affectionate humble servant,

James Boswell.

### 283a. To Henry Dundas<sup>1</sup>

My dear Dundas,

16 November 1790.

I really did not know you were come to town, till I met your nephew William to-day. I have been hurried with a variety of matters since I received the information and am now at Sir Joshua Reynolds's. You therefore cannot expect a long letter of business. But business I have with you and that of some importance. In short it is understood that Sir Adam Fergusson is to have a place, and vacate his seat for Ayrshire. I assure

<sup>1</sup> From the original in the Advocates' Library.

you *solemnly upon my honour* that in the year 1784 when I was of no inconsiderable service to the present administration, you gave me your *word and hand*, after dinner at Hillhead, that you would give me your interest to be member for my own County, which has ever been and ever will be the fond object of my ambition. I have never claimed that *promise*, because it was made, after we had participated largely of your generous wines, and *I wish to do as I would be done by*. You assured me upon *your honour* that my pamphlet against diminishing the number of the Lords of Session had made no difference between us,<sup>1</sup> and as I should answer to God I am clear that it should not, if you be the liberal man that I hold you to be. Mr. Pitt (I am utterly at a loss to know for what) has treated me arrogantly and ungratefully, as I can state to you, at our leisure. Mean time, I nevertheless am compelled for my own interest as Laird of Auchinleck, and as a sincere lover of my Country, to support him. Colonel Fullarton<sup>2</sup> is a candidate for Ayrshire. *That great county must not go into opposition*. What your views may be with respect to it, I know not. But I request to have a fair conference with you, at any hour on Thursday morning that you shall appoint; I mean any hour before three. I am, as I assure you with old regard,

My dear Dundas,  
Your faithful humble servant,  
James Boswell.

### 283b. To <Henry Dundas<sup>3</sup>>

My dear Sir.

<November 1790.>

I have been much engaged abroad since your answer to my political letter was left at my house; otherwise I should not have suffered a moment to elapse without replying to it. I own the style of it startled me, till upon looking at the copy of my hasty letter from Sir Joshua Reynolds's, I perceived that I had strangely omitted to state the modification under which I asked and you promised me your interest in Ayrshire.

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 366 n. 1.

he became M.P. for Ayrshire only in

<sup>2</sup> William Fullarton (1754-1808); 1796.

<sup>3</sup> From the original.

Lord



Lord Eglintoune, by his coalition with Sir Adam Fergusson guaranteed by you,<sup>†</sup> having then monopolised the county for seven years, my request was that in case of Colonel Montgomerie's vacating his seat, I might succeed to it, to which you answered that if I settled it with Lord Eglintoune, I might depend upon your support. This, which applied to the first seven years, you will observe, is not inconsistent with your engagement for 14 years of which your letter now gives me the first information. I had no notion that you were tied up for a second seven; and therefore my asking and your giving such a promise was certainly not absurd;—the unfortunate imputation which you ascribe to both of us

As to your compliment on my lively fancy, it has never yet exerted itself in inventing facts; nor am I one of those who are blessed with an accomodating memory which can recollect or invent facts as it may suit self-interest for a time.

I thank you for your information that Sir Adam Fergusson has not yet taken his seat. But in return I can assure you that he could not do it till next Thursday; and therefore I have reason to conclude that he will. But to bring the matter to something like an explicit conclusion—as my services to the present administration are admitted, and my attachment to it, upon independent principles still continues,—should Sir Adam Fergusson reveal to you his hitherto profound secret of vacating his seat,—will you or will you not give me what interest you may have in Ayrshire, that I may represent it? As I am, my old friend, upon my honour, open and fair with you, as I do believe you intend to be with me, pray be so kind as to let me have without delay, your answer written or verbal, as you please; because the letters which I have received are such, that I must decide one way or other. I need not add that your compliance will greatly oblige,

My dear Sir,

Your faithful humble servant,

James Boswell.

<sup>†</sup> See above, pp. 370, 376.

323a. To Henry Dundas<sup>†</sup>

Dear Sir,

Great Portland Street, 14 June 1794

I take the liberty to trouble you with a small matter which I hope you will readily settle. In the year 1784 you were so good as at my request to obtain for Mr. John Boswell writer in Ayr the office of Clerk to the Justices of the Peace for the Shire of Ayr, which, he informed me, had been vacant ever since the death of the late Mr. Charles Dalrymple of Orangefield. His commission was made out and sent down to him. He had mentioned the office as vacant by the death of Mr. *James* Dalrymple. I went myself to the Secretary of State's office, to get the mistake, as I supposed it, rectified; but found to my surprise and regret that Mr. James Dalrymple had succeeded his father, so that Mr. John Boswell's commission was of no avail to him. Since that time, he and his son, Mr. Hamilton Boswell, also Writer in Ayr, have got from Mr. James Dalrymple a joint deputation, during his lifetime, paying him about £30 yearly; and they accordingly have for some years done all the business. He is now, I understand, in a very bad state of health, so that he cannot be expected to live long.

These circumstances being considered, I flatter myself you will think it not only reasonable but just that Mr. John Boswell should be secured in the succession to an office which in truth was through your kindness granted to him ten years ago for his life; and therefore that you will be pleased to renew the commission to Mr. James Dalrymple and him. He is anxious that his son, Mr. Hamilton Boswell, should also be included; and considering that for ten years he has been without the benefit of what was intended for him and he believed he had a right to, you may probably think that addition not improper. At any rate I trust that your goodness will take care that no other person shall preclude Mr. John Boswell from having the office after Mr. James Dalrymple's right ceases. I enclose the commission and remain, dear Sir,

Your faithful and obedient humble servant,

James Boswell.

<sup>†</sup> From the original in the Advocates' Library

# LIST OF THE RECIPIENTS OF BOSWELL'S LETTERS

*(References are to the numbers of the letters.)*

- Abercrombie, James, 310, 317.  
 Abington, Frances, 301.  
 Adams, Reverend William, 227, 234.  
 Agent, an, Appendix I, 1, 2  
 Astle, Reverend Mr., 243.
- Barber, Francis, 244, 249, 250, 251.  
 Beattie, James, 107, 245, 253.  
 Berkeley, George-Monck, 226.  
 Blair, Reverend Hugh, 90  
 Boswell, Euphemia, 236.  
 Boswell, John, 167.  
 Boswell, Thomas David, 324  
 Bowyer, William, 4  
 Buchan, Lord, 54.  
 Burke, Edmund, 182  
 Burnet, James, Lord Monboddo, 118.  
 Burney, Reverend Charles, 307.
- Campbell, Reverend John, 316.  
 Carlisle, Mayor and Citizens of, 278  
 Cullen, Dr., 222.
- Dalrymple, Sir David, Lord Hailes, 5, 6, 8, 11, 14, 19, 20.  
 Dempster, George, 300.  
 Derry, Right Reverend Bishop of, 200  
 Dick, Sir Alexander, 29, 42, 49, 51, 53, 64, 65, 69, 73, 79, 85, 86, 91, 94, 96, 97, 98, 100, 184, 188, 189, 194, 195, 197, 217, 218  
 Dick, Sir John, 232.  
 Dilly, Charles, 62.  
 Douglas, Right Reverend John, 302.  
 Dundas, Henry, 207a, 283a, 283b, 322, 323a
- Garnck, David, 110, 119, 124.  
 Garrick, Mrs David, 207.  
 Gibb, Andrew, Appendix I.  
 Goldsmith, Oliver, 116.  
 Gronovius, Abraham, 24  
 Guiffardiere, Charles de, 22.
- Hardwicke, Lord, 89.  
 Hastings, Warren, 329.  
 Hawkesbury, Lord, 283, 298.  
 Hope, Dr, 222  
 Hussey, Reverend John, 246.  
 Hutton, George Henry, 262.
- Johnson, Samuel, 23, 27, 52, 88, 106, 108, 111, 114, 121, 122, 125, 127, 128, 129, 132, 133, 134, 135, 139, 144, 152, 154, 155, 156, 163, 164, 165, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 183, 185, 187, 191, 192, 196, 198, 199, 199a, 202, 203, 205, 206, 219.  
 Johnston, John, 7.  
 Jones, Reverend Mr., 321.
- Langton, Bennet, 123, 273, 314a, 315.  
 Le Fleming, Sir Michael, Bart., 318.  
 Lettsom, Dr. John Coakley, 289, 308.  
 Lind, Dr James, 281.  
 Lisburne, Lord, 311.  
 Lonsdale, Lord, 264  
 Loudoun, Lord, 106a., 177a., 179a, 191a
- Malone, Edmond, 254, 255, 286, 287, 288, 291, 292, 294, 295, 296, 297, 327.  
 Mickle, William Julius, 113.  
 Mitchell, Andrew, 26, 31  
 Monro, Dr, 222.
- Nepean, Evan, 319.
- Orkney, Lady, 325.
- Parr, Reverend Samuel, 290  
 Percy, Right Reverend Thomas, 109, 115, 117, 158, 186, 190, 223, 225, 228, 241, 247.  
 Pinkerton, John, 229.  
 Pitt, William, Lord Chatham, 48, 57.  
 Pitt, William, the younger, 221.

- Reed, Isaac, 275, 276.  
Reynolds, Sir Joshua, 148a, 220, 230  
Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, 28, 30, 32, 41, 47.  
Scott, Sir William, 304.  
Seward, Anna, 252  
Spottiswoode, John, 238, 239.  
Steevens, George, 282  
Strahan, William, 168  
Temple, Reverend William, 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, 55, 56, 58, 59, 60, 61, 63, 66, 67, 68, 70, 71, 72, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 80, 82, 84, 87, 92, 93, 95, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 112, 131, 136, 137, 138, 140, 141, 142, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 153, 160, 161, 193, 201, 204, 242, 248, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 263, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 277, 279, 280, 285, 293, 299, 305, 306, 309, 313, 314, 320, 323, 326, 328, 330, 331, 332.  
Temple, Mrs. William, 130.  
Thrale, Henry, 120, 126.  
Thrale, Mrs. Hester Lynch, 99, 157, 166, 208, 209, 210.  
Thurlow, Lord, 224.  
Walker, Joseph Cooper, 231, 233.  
Walpole, Horace, 81.  
Wilkes, John, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 43, 44, 45, 46, 50, 159, 162, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 237, 284, 303, 312.  
Young, Arthur, 83.  
Zuylen, Isabella de, 25.

# INDEX

(References are to the pages)

The abbreviations used throughout the index are B. for Boswell, S. J. for Samuel Johnson, and *Life* for Boswell's *Life of Johnson*.

- Abercorn, Lord (James Hamilton, eighth Earl of A.), 174
- Abercrombie, James, of Philadelphia, B's letters to, 442, 452, assists B. in the *Life*, 443, 452; B sends him a copy of the *Life*, 443
- Abington, Frances, B's letter to, 436; her benefit, 218
- accuracy, B's pride in his, 86, 394; importance of, 255
- actors and acting, B's interest in, 183, 401, *see also* Abington, Garrick, Love, Macklin, Ross
- Adam Collection (Buffalo, N Y), 14 n 1, 42 n 3, 156 n 2, 173 n 1, 182 n 2, 185 n 3, 196 n 1, 200 n 4, 212 n 3, 247 n 3, 311 n 4, 324 n 2, 325 n 1, 327 n 1, 328 n 1, 329 n 1, 331 n 3, 333 n 5, 335 n 1, 367 n 2, 372 n 2, 396 n 1, 403 n 1, 436 n 1, 449 n 1
- Adams, Rev Dr William, B's letters to, 325, 331, assists B in gathering material for the *Life*, 331, praises the *Tour to the Hebrides*, 331
- Addison, Joseph, his *Cato* quoted, 287, 381.
- Adelphi, the (London), 224.
- Adventurer*, *The*, 425
- Advocates, faculty of, Edinburgh, B admitted to, 91 n 3
- Advocates' Library, Edinburgh, 91 n 3, 469 n 1
- Adye, Miss, of Lichfield, 292.
- Agar, Welbore Ellis, 263 n 4.
- Agutter, Rev. William, sermon on S J's death, 453.
- Akenside, Mark, 424.
- Alden, Mrs., 159.
- Alexander, —, of Ballochmyle, B's letter to, 487; mentioned, 492, 497, 513
- Allardeen, Mrs. William Temple's property, 440.
- Allesandri, Felice, his *Moghe Fedele*, 152.
- Alnwick, 182.
- America, English attitude to, 208; B's attitude to, 208, 213-14, 216, 233, 239, 273, 298-9, taxation of, by England, 273; knowledge of Johnson in, B inquires regarding, 444, B wishes to see, 455; B wishes to be sent thither on a conciliatory mission, 275, 455
- American Revolution, 233, 239, 309, 319, 454, English attempt at conciliation, 275
- Americans, modesty of, 453.
- Ammianus Marcellinus, 362.
- Anderson, Adam, his *History of Commerce*, 177
- Anderson, Professor, of Glasgow, visits B., 264
- anecdotes, B's love of, 313, 326, 382, 394 n 1; significance of the word, 382
- Anhalt, Comte d', B meets, 52.
- Antony, B's servant, 159
- Apollo Press, 262
- apparition, *see* Wynyard, Lt George.
- Armstrong, Dr. John, the poet, B. meets in London, 152, 157; opinion of Sir Alexander Dick's poetry, 286; friendship with Thomson, 262, friendship with Wilkes, 71, 73, 315; referred to, 71, 73, 89, 91, 276, 454.
- army, *see* military life.
- Arnold, W. H., 193 n 3.
- Arthur's Seat, Edinburgh, 112, 154, 261, 289.
- arts, B's attitude to the, 66-7, 77, 79
- Ashurst, *Judge Ashurst's Charge*, a pamphlet, 494.
- Asia, B. wishes to visit, 371.
- Astle, Rev. Mr., assists B. in the *Life*, 337; B's letter to, 337.
- Aston, Mrs., 'Molly', 267, 293.

- Atkinson, Mr., an apothecary, 409
- Auchinleck Estate, business letters to the factor at, 469 *et seq.*, the house at, 90 *n* 1, 109, 112, 116 *n* 1, 241; old house, 495; old castle, 197, grotto, 116 *n* 1, 163; church, 475; cabinet, or archives, 227, 311, 437; colliery or coalwork, 469, 493; 'Ulubrae', 297, 315. distance from London, 373, 401; B.'s dislike of, 235, 240, 463; depression there, 440, 445, 462, 463, entail of the estate, 247, 256 *n* 2; B adds to the estate, 416, 424, choice of a minister for the parish, 445, 492, 495
- Auchinleck, Lord, *see* Boswell, Alexander, the elder
- autobiography, reference to the existence of B.'s, 63
- bachelors, B.'s reflections on, 99.
- Bacon, John, the sculptor, 386.
- Bagnal, Miss, 432-3, 434 *n*
- Balcarras, *see* Lindsay, Lady Anne
- Baldwin, Henry, the printer, 426.
- Baltic, B. proposes a visit to the, 268.
- Baltimore, Lord, his *Tour to the East*, 130-1.
- Banks, Sir Joseph, 386, 410, 436.
- Barber, Francis ('Frank'), Johnson's black servant, 38, 338 *n* 2; B's letters to, 338, 345, 346, 347, schooling, 341, release from slavery, 451; attacked in Hawkins's *Life of J.*, 338; has J.'s diplomas, 345, retires to Lichfield, 347 *n* 5, asks B for money, 347 *n* 3; assists B. in the *Life*, 345 *et seq.*
- Barber, Mrs. Francis, aspersed by Hawkins in his *Life of J.*, 338.
- Baretti, Joseph, 95
- Barnard, Very Rev. Dr., Dean of Derry (afterwards Bishop of Killaloe), 250, 358, 408.
- Barnston, Letitia, 294.
- Barrington, Daines, 406.
- Barrington, Admiral Samuel, 401
- Barrow, Rev. Dr William, a schoolmaster in London, 385, 405.
- Barthélemy, J. J., his *Voyage en Grèce*, 359.
- Bath, B. visits, 249, 251.
- Bathurst, Dr Richard, B.'s error concerning, in the *Life*, 425.
- Batt, John Thomas, 418.
- Batt, Rev. Mr., 354.
- Baxter, Andrew, association with John Wilkes, 69.
- Baxter, Rev Richard, his *Call to the Unconverted* (in Erse), 204.
- Beattie, Rev. James, B.'s letters to, 181, 339 *n* 1, 349; B. introduces him to J., 181-2; quoted, 190-1; *Essay on Truth*, 190; *Essay on Poetry and Music*, 330; B asks his assistance in the *Life*, 339 *n* 1, 349 *n* 2.
- Beaucher, Topham, B. visits, 223-4.
- Bedford, Lord (John Russell, fourth Duke of B.), 160
- Bell, printer of *The Oracle*, 426.
- Bentinck, Count Godard, 47
- Bentivoglio, Guido, his *History of the Wars of Flanders*, 175.
- Berkeley, George Monck, B.'s letter to, 324.
- Berlin, B. visits, 45, 52.
- Bettany, Lewis, quoted, 1 *n* 1.
- Bible quoted, 56, 153, 239, 304; B. reads the, 305
- Biographia Britannica*, 262; second edition, 387
- Biographical Dictionary*, 262.
- biography, art and practice of, B's interest in the, 86, 92, 255, 340, 344, 349, plans to write the *Life of Sir Alexander Dick*, 280; of Johnson, 246, 325-6, 336, 340; of Lord Kames, 234, of General Oglethorpe, 154 *n* 2; of Ruddiman, 282.
- Black, Professor Joseph, 235
- Blacket, Sir Thomas Wentworth, 329
- Blagden, Dr, afterwards Sir, Charles, 407, 418, 434; proposed for the Literary Club, 410, blackballed, 414.
- Blair, Catherine, ('Kate', 'the Princess', 'the Herress'), 109, 112, 115 *et seq.*, 122, 124, 127 *et seq.*, 130, 132, B quarrels with, 133; determines to renounce, 134; declares her a jilt, 135; renews his suit, 143 *et seq.*; grateful for his escape, 162, meets her, 165; the old flame re-kindled, 168-9
- Blair, Rev Dr Hugh, 114; B.'s letter to, 156; his edition of Shakespeare, 185 *n* 1; misunderstanding with S. J., 203.

- Bleackley, Horace, quoted, 85 n 1  
 Blumenbach, J F, 297  
 Board of Green Cloth, 143.  
 Bolton, Dukes of, 401 n 3  
 Boscawen, Hon. Mrs., 232 n 2.  
 Bosville, Elizabeth Diana, afterwards Lady Macdonald, 104, 108-9, 136, 224.  
 Bosville, Godfrey, B.'s 'chief', 104, B.'s proposed visit to, 310, fellow-member with S J. of a London club, 311.  
 Boswell, spelling of the name, 4 n 3, 17-18.  
 Boswell, Alexander, the elder, Lord Auchinleck, father of the biographer, relations with J B, 55, 99, 127, 135, 159, 177, 198, 215, 228, 235, 240, 260, 307, J B's affection for, 14, 21, 64, 90, allowance to J. B. while abroad, 33; extorts renunciation of J. B.'s birthright, 241; second marriage, 177 n 2, treatment of J B's wife, 235, 306, politics, engages in, 365 n 2; failing health, 241, 283, 297, 301; death, 312 n 3.  
 Boswell, Alexander, the younger, afterwards Sir Alexander, eldest son of the biographer, birth, 242-3, 244; health, 354; education, 356; at Eton, 380, 384, 388, 435; opposes his father, 367, a 'steady boy', 439, his father's proxy at Auchinleck, 488.  
 Boswell, Captain Bruce, of the East India Company, cousin of the biographer, 413, 415, 470  
 Boswell, Charles, illegitimate son of J. B., 15  
 Boswell, David, infant son of the biographer, 259 n 2  
 Boswell, David, *see* Boswell, Thomas David  
 Boswell, Elizabeth, second wife of Lord Auchinleck, marriage, 177 n 2; disagreement with John B., 187, character, 240, 301, 307; relations with J. B.'s daughters, 383, 462.  
 Boswell, Elizabeth, ('Betsy'), youngest daughter of the biographer, 374, 375, 379, 382-3, 390, 435.  
 Boswell, Euphemia Erskine, first wife of Lord Auchinleck, mother of the biographer, 88 n 1; death, 90, letter of, quoted, 187 n 2.  
 Boswell, Euphemia, ('Phemy') second daughter of the biographer, 373, 374, 375, 383, 399, 435, 444; letter to, 332.  
 Boswell, Hamilton, a solicitor, 527.  
 Boswell, JAMES, the biographer: ancestry, 335, birth, anecdote of, 353, schooldays, 130, 432, universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow, 5 n 4, 6, 7 n 1; first visit to London, 8, visits Cambridge, 217 n 2, desires a commission in the Guards, 8, 12 n 1, 15, 162 n 1, 299, 305, second visit to London, 7 n 1, 10 *et seq*; illegitimate son, 15, intimacy with Johnson, 22, 24 *et seq*, goes to study law at Utrecht, 41-2, travels in Holland, Germany, and Switzerland, 45-68; meets Voltaire, 66, friendship with Rousseau, 58 *et seq*; travels in Italy, 68-84, intimacy with Wilkes 68 *et seq.*, goes to Corsica, 86, death of his mother, and return to London, 89, calls on Lord Chatham to plead the Corsican cause, 88 n 1, admitted to the Faculty of Advocates, 91 n 3; relations with his mistress, Mrs. D—, 100, 102, 105-7, 125, 135, 142, 164; birth of illegitimate daughter, Sally, 142, courtship of Miss Blair, 109-69, activity on behalf of John Dick, 88 n 5, 121-2, 126, 132, 150-3; eulogized by the University of Corte, 142; publishes his *Account of Corsica*, 146; his legal practice in Scotland, 92, 100-1, 115, 231, 236, 297; interest in the Douglas Cause, 157; Counsellor to Sir A. Dick, 91, 174; courtship of Mary Ann Montgomery, 165-71; visits Ireland, 170-1; marries Margaret Montgomery, 173 n 3; birth and death of his first child, 178, residence in the Canongate, Edinburgh, 179; later visits to London, 150, 173, 212, 247, 272, 290, 311; Paoli visits Auchinleck, 184; birth of eldest daughter, 193; birthright, renunciation of his, 241; visits the Highlands and Hebrides with S J., 194-6; attends the

Lord Mayor's dinner, 220; intimacy with the Hon Mrs Stuart, 224-6; birth of his son, Alexander, 243; moves to a villa near Edinburgh, 261, visits Lichfield, Chester, Liverpool, and Carlisle, 291-5, financial embarrassment, 301; death of his father, 312 n 3; master of Auchinleck, 315; removes to London, 329, 332; admitted to the English Bar, 328, 331 n 3; residence in Queen Anne St., 353; domestic arrangements in London, 354, 367; goes the Northern Circuit, 349-50, 355-6, 376-7; candidacy as M.P. for Ayrshire, 355, 367, 370-1; chairman of the General Quarter Sessions, 371; falls from horseback, 369-70; Recorder of Carlisle, 341, 365, 370, 375, 399, resigns, 397-8, 435; purchases an estate alienated from Auchinleck, 416; takes chances in the State Lottery, 421, residence in Great Portland St., 435; takes legal chambers in Inner Temple Lane, 429, 432; lack of legal practice in England, 351, 353, 378, 384, 439, 441. Secretary for Foreign Correspondence in the Royal Academy, 429 n 1; considers a second marriage, 400, 432, knocked down and robbed, 446, 455; proposed tour to the Allied Armies in Flanders, 447, 448, 449, 498, requests a diplomatic appointment in Corsica, 459; tour to 'the western parts of the island', 488; last illness and death, 464-8.

*Publications;*

1. *The Cub at Newmarket*, 9.
2. *Ode to Tragedy*, 9 n 2.
3. *Elegy on the Death of an Amiable Young Lady*, 9 n 2, 19 n 1.
4. *Critical Strictures on Mallet's 'Elvira'*, 434 n 3.
5. *Letters between Erskine and Boswell*, 9 n 2.
6. *Dissertation on Civil Law*, 93-5.
7. *Essence of the Douglas Cause*, 113 n 1, 124 n 1.
8. *Thesis on Civil Law*, 93-5.
9. *Dorando, a Spanish Tale*, 124, 128, 130.
10. *Account of Corsica and the*

*Journal of a Tour to that Island*, at work on, 92, 103, 109, 111, 113, 126, 128; terms of publication, 118-20; in press, 137-8; Garrick's opinion, 148, Gray's, 129 n 1, Johnson's, 129 n 2, Temple's, 133; Walpole's advice, 147; translations of, 148; second edition, 148; third (Dublin) edition, 163; success of, 148, 154, 158, 163, 171.

11. *British Essays in favour of the Brave Corsicans*, 157.

12. *The Hypochondriack*, 289.

13. *Letter to the People of Scotland on the Present State of the Nation*, 318-19; sent to Reynolds, 319, Pitt, 320, Percy, 322, B. wishes it reprinted in Dublin, 323.

14. *Letter to the People of Scotland on the . . . Number of the Lords of Session*, 327 n 1, 365 n 2, 366, 525.

15. *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 326, 330; second edition, 330; a Dublin edition, 330; copy sent to Percy, 335; to Campbell, 452; praised by Anna Seward, 348 n 1; by Lord Thurlow, 390; by Dr. Adams, 331; 'part of the *Life*', 452.

16. *No Abolition of Slavery*, 433, 435.

17. *Life of Samuel Johnson*, B. plans to write, 246, 326, 328, at work on, 331, 336, 340, 346, 348, 351-2, 359, 378, 382, advertised in the *Tour to the Hebrides*, 382 n 2; method of composition, 354, 375; Malone's assistance, 375, 379, 380-1, 388, 390, 414, 424 *et seq.*; nearing the conclusion, 354, 356, 361, 405, 410, 414, 416, 422, 432; printing begins, 380, 388, 393; format, 388, 414, 417; B. considers selling, 393, 416, 421, 423-4, 428; cancelled pages, 417, 422, 424; B. fears its depreciation, 423, 432; price, 423, 428; title, 427, 428; publication, 435; presentation copies, 432, 435, 437 n 2, sale, 440; second edition, 443, 446, 447, 449, 450; sale of second edition, 449, 456, presentation copies of second edition, 443, 449, 453; third edition, material for, 451-2, 454.



- Projected, Unpublished, Doubtful or Spurious Works* .
- Parliament, a Poem*, 519; 'Character' of Mrs Boswell, 374, Pamphlet on the Test and Corporation Acts, 390, Lines on Burke, [spurious] 426; *An Appeal to the People*, &c, 433; Life of Sir Alexander Dick, Bart, 280, *Praises of Dr Samuel Johnson*, by *Contemporary Writers* [never pub], 322; Remarks on Johnson's *Journey to the Western Islands*, 212, 218, 222, 246; Edition of Izaak Walton's *Lives*, 260, see also biography, plans
- Boswell, James, younger son of the biographer, 384-5, 388, 399, 434-5, 464, letters of, 464 *et seq*
- Boswell, Jean, 478, 490, 514
- Boswell, Dr John, uncle of the biographer, 27 n 1, 62, 120; letter to, 256; J. B. takes his villa, 261; death, 309
- Boswell, Lt John, brother of the biographer, second son of Lord Auchinleck, 90 n 1, 187, 228.
- Boswell, John, cousin of the biographer, 462-3, 469 *et seq*.
- Boswell, John, a solicitor, 498, 527
- Boswell, Margaret Montgomerie, Mrs James Boswell, character of, 239, 272, 295, 371-2, 381, accompanies B. to Ireland, 170-2; marriage, 173, referred to, 369; B's devotion to, 180, 239, 283, 'Minerva', 276; opinion of S J, 235, sends marmalade to S J, 261; birth of her children, 178, 193, 242-3, health, 182, 242, 266 n 3, 271-2, 313, 345, 348 *et seq*, 358, 362, 364-5, 520, last illness, 368 *et seq*, 372, 373, 391; funeral, 374.
- Boswell, 'Nelly', 515
- Boswell, Robert, writer to the Signet, 486, 497.
- Boswell, 'Sally', daughter of J. B. and Mrs. D—, 142.
- Boswell, Thomas David, brother of the biographer, youngest son of Lord Auchinleck, 90 n 1, 105, 109, 241, 342-3, 356, 359, 362, 384, 386, 401, character, 164, 302 n 1, 305-6; assumes the name Thomas, 105 n 1; merchant in Valencia, 227, banker in London, 305, 412, re-
- turn from Spain, 302, 305; meet Johnson, 302; criticizes J. B. 351, advises J. B. to quit London for Ayrshire, 374, 416, 462; neglected by Dundas, 356, 365, appointed to the Navy Office, 423; letter of J. B. to, 461, amanuensis for J. B., 466; letter of, 468
- Boswell, Veronica (Mrs David Montgomerie), aunt of the biographer, 165 n 2
- Boswell, Veronica, eldest daughter of the biographer, 193, 261, 362, 364, 374-5, 383, 435, 444.
- Boswelliana*, quoted, 225, 435 n 3.
- Botetourt, Lord (Norborne Berkeley, fourth Baron B), 152.
- Boufflers, Mme de, visits S. J., 245.
- Bourke, Most Rev. Joseph Deane, 429
- Bowyer, William, letter to, 9
- Boy-de-Latour, Mme, 86.
- Boydell, Alderman John, 343, 520 n 1. a brief, B's first, 92, 101.
- British Museum, 317.
- Broadley, A. M., 255 n 2.
- Brocklesby, Dr., 321.
- broom-brush, 197.
- Brown, J. T. T., 187 n 2.
- Brown, Lancelot ('Capability'), 238.
- Browne, Moses, author of *Pascatory Eclogues*, 395.
- Bruce, James, overseer at Auchinleck, 116 n 1, 469, 471.
- Bruce, Mrs., B's housekeeper, 462.
- Bruce, Robert, 244, 335.
- Buccleugh, Duke of, B. writes to, 166.
- Buchan, Lord, see Erskine.
- Buchanan, Mrs., 375
- Buckby, Rev. Mr., 324
- Buckingham, Lord, his *Rehearsal* quoted, 159-60
- Buffon, 232
- Bunbury, Sir Thomas Charles, Bart., 418.
- burgess-ticket, 151.
- Burgh, James, his *Political Disquisitions*, 250.
- Burgoyne, General John, proposed by B. for the Literary Club, 408, blackballed, 409-10.
- Burke, Edmund, happiness of, 238, *Speech on Conciliation with America*, 209, 233; B. solicits correspondence with, 275, B's conversations with, 284; *European Settle-*

- ments in America, 285, 387; B. visits, 367; *Speech on French Affairs*, 391; 'Anti-French Revolution rage', 406; praises Malone, 406-8; Lines to Burke (*Oracle*), falsely attributed to B., 426, apostrophized in *No Abolition of Slavery*, 434 n.
- Burke, Richard, 386, 407, 410, 422.
- Burke, William, 387.
- Burnet, James, *see* Monboddo, Lord
- Burney, Dr Charles, 407, 410, 441
- Burney, Frances, her *Cecilia*, 314
- Burzynski, Count, Polish Ambassador, 184.
- Bute, Lord, characterized, 83, 333.
- Butler, Rt Rev John, Bishop of Oxford, B. visits, 276.
- Cairncross Cause, B. employed in the, 95 n 1
- Carmie, 16.
- Calvinism, 54.
- Cambridge, Richard Owen, 405; B. dines with, 219.
- Cambridge University, 7 n 1, 10 n 2, 19, 217, 304.
- Campbell, Sir Archibald, 219.
- Campbell, Bruce, 475 *et seq.*
- Campbell, Rev John, of Kippen, letter to, 449; criticisms of the *Life*, 450 *et seq.*
- Campbell, Col. Mure, 263
- Campbell of Auchnaba, 267.
- Canadians' dislike of Americans, 233.
- caricature, B. designs a, 103.
- Carlisle, B.'s visits to, 294, 297, 321, 396; proposes to visit it in company with S. J., 260, 263, 310, B. becomes Recorder of, 341, letter of resignation, 398
- Carrickfergus*, a song, 151, 165, 170-1.
- Cassius, Lord, 355
- cathedrals visited by S. J., 259
- Catherine II, Empress of Russia, 268 n 1; gifts to Reynolds, 394-5
- Cator, John, 430; B. visits at Beckenham, 402 n 5, 403, 437
- Catt, Henri, B. meets, 52
- 'Celia', *see* Temple, Ann Stow.
- ceremony, B.'s love of, 225, 227.
- Chapone, Hester, 232 n 2
- Charlemont, Lord, 429
- Charles I, *see* King Charles.
- Charnière, Mme. de, *see* Zuylen, Isabella de.
- Chatham, Lord, *see* Pitt, William, the elder.
- chemistry, 235.
- Chester, B.'s visit to, 293-5, 296, 299-300
- Chesterfield, Lord (Philip Dormer Stanhope, fourth Earl), *Memoirs and Letters to his Friends*, 260.
- children, B.'s affection for his, 178, 206, 240, 332; desire for, 99, education of his, 332, 353-4, 356, 374, 383-4; *see also* under Boswell, Alexander, Elizabeth, Euphemia, James, and Veronica
- chocolate, 116, 249, 393
- Christmas, 202
- Christ's Hospital, London, 343, 354.
- Churchill, Charles, his *Duellist*, 74; his *Epistle to Hogarth*, 13, 16, his *Ghost*, 13; interest in the *North Briton*, 31; death, 69, 73-4; Wilkes proposes to edit his poems, 70, 73; compared to Juvenal, 70.
- Cibber, Colley, 195.
- Cicero, quoted, 74, 302, 357, 378.
- Cider Bill, 23
- 'citizen of the world', B. a, 72.
- Clackmannan election, 218.
- clans, Highland, 196.
- Clark, Richard, 343.
- classical quotations, B.'s use of, 381; *see also* Horace, Virgil, &c
- Claxton, John ('Clack'), 19, 149, 161, 188, 214, 217, 223, 225, 430
- clergy, B.'s reflections on the, 97-8, 129, 143.
- Chiefden (Bucks), Taplow Court, 463.
- Clifford, Lord (Hugh, fourth Baron C. of Chudleigh), 220, 229, B. visits, 228
- clothes, B.'s love of gay, 133, 174 n, 367
- club, 311; *see also* Literary Club.
- Coalition, the Great, 355, 371.
- Cobb, Mrs., of Lichfield, 292.
- Cochrane, Basil, B.'s uncle, 180.
- Cockburne, Alexander, 242.
- Coldstream Guards, B. at the mess of the, 405.
- college cook, anecdote of a, 418
- Collingwood, Milcha, 213.
- Colomb, Rupert, 319 n 1, 327 n 2, 520 n 1
- Colvill, Rev. Robert, 142.
- Colvill, Walter, 143.
- comédie larmoyante*, 193.

- comedy, state of English, in 1773, 192-3.  
 concert, B's, 160, 226, 230, 240, 285, 318, 366, 460  
 concubinage, B's reflections on, 215-16, 219.  
*Conquest of Goree*, a work erroneously ascribed to S J, 281.  
 Constantinople, 131  
 conversation, B's delight in, 181, 286; prepares in advance for, 39 n 1; not from books, 214; B records Hume's, 175, 232, Johnson's, 30, 214, 326, 438, Oglethorpe's, 154, Paoli's, 251-2; Rousseau's, 87; Voltaire's, 57 n 1, 66, Miss Blair's, 139 ff.; B criticized for recording, 438.  
 Conway, Henry Seymour, 103.  
 Corradini, Gertrude (Wilkes's mistress), 68 n 2, 73, 81-2, 85 n 1.  
 correspondence, B's delight in, 27, 84, 101, 107, 111, 113, 193, 201, 227, 288, 313, 344  
 Corsica, B. plans to visit, 77-8, stay in, 84, 86; status of in 1768, 164; in 1794, 459, B's exertions on behalf of, 152, 155, 157; surrendered to France, 157; British Navy near, 459 n 2 *See also under* Boswell, Publications, *Account of Corsica and British Essays in favour of the Brave Corsicans*  
 Corsican costume, B wears, 174.  
 Corte (Corsica), captured by the French, 172; University of, eulogizes B, 142  
 Courtenay, John, 332, 340, 345, 349, 359-60, 363, 369, 386, 404, 410, 421-2, 425 *et seq.*, 460; at Bath, 414; B presents his *Literary and Moral Character of Dr Johnson* to Abercrombie, 444  
 courtezans, anecdote regarding, 232.  
 Covent Garden Theatre, 192.  
 Crabbe, George, B. sends his *Village* and the *Library* to Temple, 446.  
 Craufurd, General, 65  
 Craufurd, Lady, 472.  
 Cromwell, Oliver, mentioned, 71.  
 Crosbie, Andrew, 166, 234, 258  
 Crown and Anchor Tavern, Strand, 157, 248, 253  
 Cullen, Dr., of Edinburgh, 320.  
 Cullen, Robert (afterwards Lord Cullen), 266.  
 Culloden, battle of, 196.  
 Cumberland, Richard, 429  
 Cunninghame vs Cuninghame, a cause in which B was concerned, 334.  
 Cuninghame, Sir John, 157.  
 D—, Mrs ('the Moffatt woman'), B's mistress, 100, 102, 105-7, 112, 114, 117-18, 125, 135, 142, 164, 169, gives birth to a child, 142; B deserts, 164  
 Dalling, General Sir John, Bart. B. visits, 448.  
 Dallot, Honorius, 164.  
 Dalrymple, Charles, 527  
 Dalrymple, Sir David (Lord Hailes), B's 'Maecenas', 4, 10 n 1, S J's opinion of, 31; revises B's *Account of Corsica*, 113, 121, 137; his *Annals of Scotland* revised by S J, 203, 205, 210, 227, 244, 272, 279; a specimen sent to Temple by B, 237; attitude to Ossian, 210; asks S J to write a character of Robert Bruce, 244; answers arguments of S J, 254; submits a legal opinion to S J., 271, receives a presentation copy of S. J.'s *Journey to the Western Islands*, 258; furnishes materials for S J.'s *Life of Thomson*, 266.  
 Dalrymple, James, 527.  
 Dalrymple, John (afterwards Sir John), 179  
 Dance, George, the artist, B. dines with, 423.  
 Dance, James, *see* Love  
 Daniel, Gabriel, his *Histoire de France*, 175.  
 Dashwood, Sir Francis, 16.  
 Davenport, Sir Thomas, 334.  
 Davies, Rev Dr., Head Master of Eton, 380, 385.  
 Davies, Thomas, B. dines with, 218.  
 death, B's fear of, 239, 431, 460  
 De Leyre, Alexandre, 66, 76.  
 Dempster, George, 19, 144; his sophistry refuted by S. J., 27, 29; letter to, 434  
 Derbyshire, visited by B. and J, 248.  
 Derrick, Samuel, B's 'governor' in London, 281.  
 Devaynes, Mr, an apothecary, 399, 447, 465 n.  
 Devonshire, fourth and fifth Dukes of, relations with George III, 252.

- Dick family, account of the, 95-7
- Dick, Sir Alexander, Bart., account of, 61 *n*, character of, 78, 91, 114, 286, a 'Corycius senex', 78, 91, 114; President of the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh, 280; poetry, 91, 286, 289; lines to B., 289 *n* 2, friend of Benjamin Franklin, 160 *n* 3; B spends his Saturdays with, 151; B proposes to write his biography, 280, kindness to Mrs B., 276-7; friend of John Wilkes, 315, his 'charter chest', 126, his collection of letters, 315; referred to, 157, 230, 234, 256, 454.
- Dick, Charles ('the Pretender'), 153, 158.
- Dick, James, 158
- Dick, Janet ('Jessie'), 80 *n* 4, 161, 234; B. considers paying his court to, 150, 161, musical interests, 151.
- Dick, John, British Consul at Leghorn, later Sir John Dick, Bart., account of, 80 *n* 2; claim to a baronetcy, 88 *n* 5; B's exertions on behalf of, 88 *n* 5, 95, 121, 126, 132, 150-3, B meets in London, 150; presented at court, 152; gifts to B., 151, referred to, 158, 172, 289; letter to, 460; B. asks for a loan of money, 329.
- Dick, Lady, wife of the above, 150-1.
- Dick, Sir William, Bart., 88 *n* 5, 151.
- Dick, Ensign William, son of Sir Alexander D., 289, 291
- Dick-Cunyngham, Sir W S., Bart., 88 *n* 2, 121 *n* 4, 126 *n* 1, 142 *n* 2, 170 *n* 1, 172 *n* 2, 289 *n* 3, 290 *n* 3
- Diderot, Denys, a translation of the Preface to S. J.'s *Dictionary*, 245
- Dilly family, 285.
- Dilly, Charles, letter to, 118; purchases B's *Account of Corsica*, 118, 120; B. makes his head-quarters in London with, 146, 173, 283-4; B's *chargé d'affaires*, 227, 520; dinners at his house, 313, 332, 390, 405, 429, 441, associates with radicals, 390.
- Dilly, Edward, last illness of, 285.
- Dilly, John, 285, 316
- dinners, B. 'constantly invited to', 218, 224, 332, 358, 362, 390; gives to friends, 69, 106, 160, 233, 234, 345, 358, 386, 418, 462.
- diplomatic life, B. ambitious to enter, 74, 96, 275, 455, 459-60, 519.
- dissipation, B.'s, 8, 12, 77, 106, 115 *et seq.*, 149-50, 220, 223, 344, 359, 369, 381, 405, 447, 461; B. 'repels', 43, 216, 229; *see also* drunkenness
- Dodd, Rev. Dr William, B. anxious for his pardon, 264; J. writes a letter for, 403; execution of, referred to, 265; bibliography concerning, 264 *n* 1, papers concerning, 264 *n* 1.
- Dodsley, James, 9.
- Donaldson, Alexander, 9, his edition of Shakespeare, 185
- Douglas, Archibald, 113 *n* 1, 124 *n* 1.
- Douglas Cause, 113, 124 *n* 1, 157; B appears in London as one of the counsel, 272
- Douglas, Lady Jane, 113, 124 *n* 1.
- Douglas, Rt. Rev. John, Bishop of Carlisle and later of Salisbury, Dean of Windsor, 376 *n* 2, 455; proposed for the Literary Club, 410; blackballed, 414, letter to, 436.
- Douglas, Sir William, 152
- Doxy, Miss, 296.
- drama, condition of the English, 188-9, 192.
- Dreer Collection, Philadelphia, 9 *n* 1.
- Drummond, Most Rev. Robert Hay, Archbishop of York, 308.
- drunkenness, B.'s, 106, 115, 117, 169, 225 *n* 2, 369, 461.
- Drury Lane Theatre, 185, 192; Christmas entertainment at, 202.
- Dryden, John, his *Limberham* referred to, 108
- Dublin, B visits, 171; luxury in, 171, 426; Mayor of, B. dines with the, 171 *n* 2.
- Dublin University, S. J.'s diploma from, 345 *n* 3
- Duchesne, M., 85 *n* 3.
- Duchesne, Mme., 87
- duel, B avoids a, 67-8.
- Dumfries, Lord, 355, 502
- Dun, Rev. John, pastor of the church at Auchinleck, 240, 374; publishes his sermons, 387; death of, 445 *n* 2, 491.
- \*Dundas, Henry, (afterwards first Viscount Melville), appointed King's Advocate, 225; B sus-

- pected of a newspaper attack on, 242; B's esteem for, 243, neglect of the Boswells, 353, 356, 365-6, 390, 420; gives Thomas B a place in the Navy Office, 423; quarrel with Pitt, 367; forms a coalition in Scotland against B. and others, 370, 376; appealed to on behalf of Francis Temple, 439-40, 457, letters to, 459, 523-27
- Dundee, John, Viscount, 289
- Durham Cathedral, 92
- Earle, Mr, a surgeon, 447, 465 n
- East India Company, 317, Mrs B's nephew in the, 457
- Easton Maudrit, 341.
- Edinburgh, B's dislike of, 8, 212, 228, 383.
- Edinburgh University, 5 n 4, 7 n 1
- Edwards, Oliver, 405
- Eglintoun, Lord (Alexander Montgomerie, tenth Earl of E), 9 n 3, 169.
- Eglintoun, Lord (Archibald Montgomerie, eleventh Earl of E), brother of the above, 355, 370-1.
- Ehbank, Lord, 186.
- Eliot, Edward, of Port Eliot (later Baron Eliot of St Germans), 319-20, mentioned, 358, 399, 401, 419, 421, 447.
- Elliot, Sir Gilbert, Bart., 179
- Elliot, Sir Gilbert, Bart (afterwards Lord Minto), 460 n 1.
- Emetulla, a Turkish lady, 51
- emigration, evils of, 198.
- entail, 247, 256 n 2.
- Epictetus, 166
- Episcopal Church of Scotland, 282.
- Erskine, Hon. Andrew, 47 n 2, 218.
- Erskine, David Steuart, eleventh Earl of Buchan, 88 n 1
- Erskine, Hon. Henry, later Lord Advocate of Scotland, 334.
- Erskine, Hon. Thomas, 296, 415, 418.
- Eton, B. visits, 380, 385.
- European Magazine*, 446.
- Falconer, Rt. Rev Dr, 282
- Falconer, Thomas, 300.
- fame, B.'s passion for, 128-9, 138, 142, 217.
- Farington Diary* quoted, 360 n 1, 434 n 2.
- fear, B. given to, 68, 239.
- Fergusson, Dr Adam, 114, 179; *Essay on the History of Civil Society*, 106.
- Fergusson, Sir Adam, 355, 370, 525-26.
- Fielding, Henry, 418
- Fletcher, Andrew, of Saltoun, 60.
- 'flightiness', B's, 8, 15, 111.
- Flood, Henry, 340, 386; epitaph for S. J., 389
- Florence, B in, 84.
- flute, B plays a, 67.
- Foote, Samuel, his *Mayor of Garret*, 13, his *Piecy in Pattens*, 202
- Forbes, Mr, a surgeon, 154.
- Forbes, Sir William, 275, 319, 513
- Fordyce, Dr George, 410
- Fort Augustus, 195
- Fowles, Robert, 117 n.
- Fox, Hon. Charles James, 356 n 1, 357, at the Literary Club, 418, 421-2; the Libel Bill, 426; *Letter to Fox*, a pamphlet, 446.
- Fox, Henry, first Lord Holland, 16.
- Franklin, Benjamin, friend of Sir Alexander Dick, 160 n 3, 454 n 2, dines with B, 160, his *Shilling of Waves* by Owl, 216.
- Frederick the Great, his verse, 30-1.
- freedom of the will, 206, 306.
- French, B.'s opinion of the, 43, 67.
- French language, B learns the, 42, 53, 59, letters in the, 58, 62, 65, 76, 85.
- French Revolution, 386, 408, 435, 459, 461; effect in England, 494.
- Fresnoy, Lenglet du, his *Méthode pour étudier l'Histoire*, 22.
- friendship, B.'s reflections on, 18.
- Frisian language, 44
- Fullarton, Mr., 'the Nabob', a surtor of Miss Blair's, 118, 120, 132, 139, 143-4, 168
- Fullarton, Col. William, 525.
- Gaelic language, 204, 211, 228.
- gaming, B.'s indulgence in, 161-2.
- Garcilaso de la Vega, historian of Peru, 179
- Garforth, J. B., 345-6, 349.
- Garrick, David, character of, 183; his acting eulogized by B., 183 n 3; his services to Shakespeare, 185 n 1; his Prologues, 202; writes the Prologue to *She Stoops to Conquer*, 193; knowledge of the classics, 202, relations with S. J.,

- 195, 452; 'Davy', 195 n 2, relations with W. J. Mickle, 188, correspondence with B, 148, 194 n 2, 201, 311; dines with B, 160; conversation, 214; health, 182-3; death, 281.
- Garrick, Eva (Mrs. David G.), 196, B.'s letter to, 311.
- Garrick, Peter, B. visits, 292.
- Gastrell, Mrs., of Lichfield, 293.
- Gay, John, the *Beggar's Opera* quoted, 118, 163, 329.
- General Assembly, Edinburgh, B. at the bar of, 224, 228-9.
- generosity, B.'s, 131, 147, 151, 162, 169, 301, 482 *et seq.*, 520.
- Geneva, B. in, 65, 66; political life in, 83.
- genius, *see* men of genius.
- Genoa, B. in, 84, treatment of the Corsicans, 155, 157.
- Gentile, Mr., 330.
- Gentleman's Magazine*, 348.
- George II, 195.
- George III, reads B.'s *Account of Corsica*, 174, mental crisis, 357; recovery, 362, relations with Hume, 161 n, 231 n 2.
- George, Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV, 355, B. moves an Address to, and carries it to London, 371, 376.
- Giant's Causeway, 172.
- Gibb, Andrew, overseer at Auchinleck, 472 *et seq.*
- Gibbon, Edward, personal appearance, 287; B.'s hatred of, 287, publication of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 250; vindication of the *Decline and Fall*, 287.
- Gillespie, Dr., of Edinburgh, 477.
- Gillcranky*, *see* *Killiecrankie*.
- Gilmour, Sir Alexander, one of Miss Blair's suitors, 143-4, 146.
- Glasgow, 117 n.
- Glasgow University, 5 n 4.
- Glencarn, Lord, 355.
- Gloucester, Duke of (brother of George III), B. presented to, 289.
- Godet, Philippe, 46 n.
- Goldsmith, Oliver, B.'s affection for, 193; production of *She Stoops to Conquer*, 192-3, B. and Dr Percy to meet at G.'s chambers, 193; his *Retaliation* sent to B. by Garrick, 201; publication of his collected works, 392, 394; his projected Cyclopaedia, 394; dislike of nicknames, 257; death, 197-8, 201, 203; mentioned, 204, 274.
- good humour, B.'s, 72, 292-3, 427.
- Gordon Riots, 303.
- Granger, Rev. James, *Biographical History*, 255.
- Grantham, B. at, 213, 224.
- Gratz, Simon, 248 n 2.
- Gray, Thomas, confused with an apothecary, 20, 28; B. desires to meet, 161, opinion of B.'s *Account of Corsica*, 129 n; *Elegy*, B.'s love of the, 183; *Progress of Poesy*, quoted, 298, 348; Poems, Glasgow edition, 227; death, 183; mentioned, 133; Temple's 'character' of, 217, 222, 234.
- Greek, B.'s knowledge of, 301, 309.
- Green, Matthew, his *Spleen*, 2.
- Green, Richard, of Lichfield, 292, 347.
- greenbook scheme, 288, 307.
- Greene, Edward Burnaby, his *Satires of Juvenal paraphrastically imitated*, 17, 23.
- Greenwich, B. visits with S. J., 39.
- Gregory, Dr. John, his *Comparative View*, 103; mentioned, 114; his *Father's Legacy to his Daughters*, 200.
- Gribbel, John, 334 n 2.
- Gronovius, Abraham, 33, 45.
- Guicciardini, Francesco, his *History of Italy*, 175.
- Guiffardière, Rev. Charles de, letter to, 42.
- Gwatkin, Richard Lovell, 461.
- Gwatkin, Theophila Palmer (Mrs. Richard Lovell G.), 343.
- Habeas Corpus*, 386.
- Hackett, E. Byrne, 411 n 2.
- Haddington, Lord, 266.
- Hague, the, B.'s relatives at, 33; B. visits, 44, 45.
- Hailes, Lord, *see* Dalrymple, Sir David.
- Hamilton, Douglas, eighth Duke of, 113 n 1.
- Hamilton, John, 5.
- Hamilton, Gavin, the painter, 197, 520.
- Hamilton, William Gerard, 340, 424.

- happiness, B.'s reflections on, 246.  
 Hardwicke, Lord (Philip Yorke, second Earl of H), B seeks a conference with, 156  
 Harris, James ('Hermes'), B reads his treatise on *Happiness*, 20; a favourite with Temple, 21; B ridicules his style, 219  
 Hastings, Warren, trial and acquittal of, 350-1, 406, 467, B dines with, 405; B's letter to, 466.  
 Haverford College, Pennsylvania, 456  
*n 2*  
 Hawkesbury, Lord (Charles Jenkinson, first Earl of Liverpool), B's letter to, 403, 430  
 Hawkins, Sir Christopher, 405, 447  
 Hawkins, Sir John ('Hawky'), attacks Francis Barber in his *Life of Johnson*, 338; compelled to surrender papers of S J to Barber, 345-7; B's opinion of his *Life of Johnson*, 361, contemptuous reference to B, 361; his 'meanness', 356, unwillingness to serve his friends, 420  
 Heath, Bailey, 456.  
 Hebrideans visit B, 227  
 Hebrides, tour of B and S. J. to, first proposed, 31, 207; begun, 194, ended, 196, 200.  
 Henry, Robert, B. meets, 177; his *History of England*, 176-7.  
 Hepburn, Robert, 5.  
 Herculaneum, B. visits, 79  
 Herries, Charles, 164  
 Hervey, Rt Rev. Frederick Augustus (afterwards Earl of Bristol), B's letter to, 298  
 Hinchcliffe, Rt. Rev. Dr. John, Bishop of Peterborough, proposed for the Literary Club, 422, blackballed, 425.  
 history, defined, 177, study of, 175, 359.  
 Hockley, William, a schoolmaster, 383.  
 Holland, Lord, *see* Fox, Henry.  
 Home, Henry, *see* Kames, Lord.  
 Home, Rev. John, 189, 229.  
 Hoole, John, 335  
 Hope, Dr., of Edinburgh, 320.  
 Hopkinson, Francis, of Philadelphia, his Works sent to B., 453.  
 Horace quoted, 4, 11, 56, 82, 83, 94, 99, 108, 128, 137, 163, 167, 176, 183, 185, 202, 207, 212, 289, 309, 316, 326, 352, 404, 448.  
 Horne, Rev. Dr (afterwards Bishop of Norwich), projected edition of Walton's *Lives*, 205, 260.  
 Hornsley, Rt Rev Dr., Bishop of St David's, 446.  
 hornspoons, 197 *n 1*.  
 hospitality, 227.  
 House of Commons, B at the Bar of, 218  
 House of Lords, B at the Bar of, 224.  
 Humane Society (later the Royal Humane S), B a Steward of, 392, 427.  
 Hume, Sir Abraham, 407.  
 Hume, David, B introduced to, 2; his *History of England*, 19, 160, 167, 231, his *Autobiography*, 264; his infidelity, 27, 50, 160, 233, 255, 264, his ignorance of the New Testament, 452; his quarrel with Rousseau, 103, visits B, 160; advice regarding the study of history, 175-7, 'the Northern Epicurus', 233; attacks S. J., 233; death of, 250-1, 255; Thomas Gray's opinion of, 255-6  
 Hunter, Professor Robert, one of B's teachers in Edinburgh, 5 *n 4*, 130, 432  
 Hurd, Rt Rev. Richard, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, and (later) of Worcester, visited by Temple, 304, his *Life of Warburton*, 344-5, attacked by Parr, 357, 411  
 Hussey, Rev. James, his *Miscellany*, 339  
 Hutton, George Henry, letter to, 367.  
 hypochondria, *see* melancholy.  
 immortality, B's faith in, 69, 267, 302, 378, 399; doubts of, 239.  
 impudence, B's, 73, 87, 168.  
 Inca, *see* Garcilaso.  
 Inchiquin, Lord, 463  
 independence of spirit, B's, 11, 127, 128, 135.  
 India Bill, 317 *n 3*  
 indolence, B's, 23, 24, 201, 215, 235, 290, 303.  
 Innerhouse (Court of Session), 101.  
 Inverary, 200.  
 Inverness, B. at, 194.  
 Ireland, B's visit to, 171; B. wishes to return to, 172, 268, 336.

Irish people, their sympathy with the Corsicans, 171, B's liking for, 298-9, their loyalty to the Crown, 322

Italian, B's knowledge of, 110.

Italy, B's travels in, 68-85, proposed route through, 62; S. J's proposed tour to, 323.

Jackson, Henry, of Lichfield, 267.

jealousy, B's, 102, 225.

Jenner, Mr, the Proctor, 319.

Jephson, Robert, 352, 399, 409.

Jephson, Rev Dr. William, illness and death of, 409, 412.

Jerningham, Edward, B meets, 243, 419; his *Enthusiasm*, 365.

jug, B dances a, 172.

JOHNSON, SAMUEL

*Relations with Boswell*. B on 'a good footing with', 16, drinks wine with B, 17, 31, B. sups with, 22, 24, 27, B visits his 'garret', 26; B learns 'peace of mind' from, 29; B. reports his conversation, 30, J accompanies B to Harwich, 42; B writes to J. from Holland, 44; and from the grave of Melancthon, 58, B defends his Latinity, 93-5; B refers to J. in his *Tour to Corsica*, 137, 155; B. visits J. at Oxford, 148, J. dines with B, 156, 160, 218; B consults, respecting marriage, 173; B. neglects to write, 181, 271, 290; J promises B. to visit Scotland and the Hebrides, 31, 184, 188, 190; B's letters *en route*, 194; return from the Hebrides, 196, 200; B incites J. to write an account of the tour, 196 *et seq.*, B. keeps him informed of Hebridean matters, 207-11, 227, 246, 263, 265, 267; at the Literary Club, 218; together at Streatham, 223, J unwilling to 'share reputation', 222; J. sups with B. at Dilly's, 226, 284, B defends Johnson against Hume, 233; J. disliked by Lord Auchinleck, 235, B's tour to Oxford, Lichfield, and Derby with J., 248; B. alarmed regarding J's health, 247, 259, 275, 312, 319, 321, B assists J. in the *Life of Thomson*, 261-2, 278-9; B. proposes a trip to Carlisle, 259, 261, 266, B urges

him to answer Hume, 264, B hesitates to visit the Baltic, 268, B. differs from in politics, 273, B. reconciles J. and Percy, 277-8; J. visits B. when ill, 283, B tests J's friendship, 290, 303, J. praises B, 292; B finds J. a 'keystone of kindness', 293; B complies with a request of Lucy Porter, 296; B proposes that they meet at York, 310-11, B tries to bring J. to Wilkes's house, 316, B. wishes Johnson sent to Italy for his health, 323-4; B's devotion to, 83, 303, 310, 319; awe of, 58, 221, 263; J's affection for B, 221, 226, 253, 259, 271; harsh treatment, 253, 269, J. characterized by B, 181.

*Other Facts in his Life referred to*: satirized as 'Pomposo' by Churchill, 13, proposed tour to Italy, 203; tour to Wales, 205; attack on Macpherson's *Ossian*, 209, 211; tour to France, 244; visits Oxford, 248, 266; ill health, 259, 262, 275, 312, 319-24; death, 325-6; monument to, 386, 389, 393, 465-6. His 'court', 173; his fondness for chemistry, 235, his use of long words, 240; his love of being consulted, 252; his mastery of Scots law, 258, his letters to Americans, 443, 454; vitality of his reputation, 348; 'lived in poverty', 450; style, imitation of, 453; referred to, 83, 128, 158, 166, 212, 224, 234, 241, 249, 285, 305, 313, 360, 382, 400

*Publications of*: *London*, 39, 303; *Vanity of Human Wishes*, 221, 273, 371; *Dictionary of the English Language*, Hume's contempt for, 233; the preface translated by Diderot, 245; *The Rambler*, 22; *The Idler*, 201; *Rasselas*, 22, 267. *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, the work projected, 196, 198, 202; J. well advanced in, 203, completed, 206; sent to B., 207; errors in, 207; J's indifference to B's corrections, 207 *n* 4; read in the Hebrides, 210, Temple's opinion, 212, 217; B. proposes a series of *Remarks* on the book, 212, 218, 222, 246, 256;



- annotated by Hailes and Dick, 256, criticized by Monboddo, 258.  
*Taxation no Tyranny*, 273. *Lives of the Poets*, advertised, 260; assistance rendered by B., 261-2, 278-9, proof-sheets sent to B., 279  
*Sermons*. On Mrs. Johnson, 347, others, 443, 455. List of J's writings, B's interest in drawing up a, 281, 337, 396, 443-4, 451.  
 Johnson Museum, Lichfield, 346 *n* 1, 347 *n* 2, 348 *n* 1.  
 Johnson, Rev. William Samuel, of Stratford, Conn., 443 *n* 2.  
 Johnston, John, of Grange, cares for B's illegitimate son, 15, letter to, 14, mentioned, 107, 120, 124, 180, 188, 228, 234, 236, 284, 303, 386.  
 Jolne, A. H., 256 *n* 3.  
 Jones, Henry, his *Earl of Essex*, mentioned, 199 *n* 3.  
 Jones, Rev. Mr., 458.  
 Jopp, Provost, 207.  
 Jortin, Rev. Dr. John, 357.  
 Journal, B keeps a, 6, 16, 18, 27, 220, 225, 269, 294, 300, 372, lends it to friends to read, 6, 16, 18, 113, 129, 131, 137, 225, 251, 294, 304; publishes his Corsican, 129 *et seq.*  
 Junius, mentioned, 379  
 Juvenal, quoted, 73, 231, Churchill compared to, 70.  
 Kames, Lord (Henry Home), B takes meals with, 138-9, 234, his *History of Man*, 200, 297, attacks Johnson, 233; mentioned, 265  
 Kerth, George, *see* Marischal, Lord Keith, Robert, 157.  
 Kelley, Hugh, J's *Prologue* for, 262  
 Kenrick, Dr. William, his *Friendly and Compassionate Letter to B.*, 158.  
*Killicrankie*, a ballad, 288-9  
 Kilmarnock, 350.  
 King Charles's Day, 282.  
 Kingston, an apothecary, 465 *n*  
 Kippis, Andrew, the biographer, 387.  
 Lactantius, 266.  
 laird, B assumes the style of a, 85  
 Land's End, 187, B wishes to see, 375, B's projected visit to, 444 *n* 1, 488.  
 Langton, Bennet, letters to, 197, 392, 448, 449; quarrel with S. J., 198; his conversation, 214; dines with B., 345, 418; his *Johnsoniana*, 393, 405, 410, B. visits him at Warley Camp, 448; mentioned, 243, 265, 276, 363, 366, 434  
 Langton (the estate), 392.  
 Latin, B's letter in, 70, B's knowledge of, 93.  
 Lausanne, society in, 83.  
 law, B's course at Edinburgh University, 6, B adopts as a profession, 21, 111; B's early labours at, 91, 100-1, 113 *et seq.*, B's inaugural exercise, 101 *n* 5; B's first brief, 101, B's dislike of the profession, 229, 231, 309; B's success in the profession, 100-1, 115, 231, 236, 297.  
 Law, Ven. Archdeacon, 295, 297.  
 Law, Mr., K. C., 355  
 Lawrence (Laurence), Dr. French, proposed for the Literary Club, 418, black-balled, 422.  
 Lawrence, Dr. Thomas, 407.  
 Lee, John, K. C., 329  
 Le Fleming, Sir Michael, Bart., 366; letter to, 455.  
 Leghorn, B. in, 85.  
 Leland, Dr. Thomas, 357, 417.  
 letter-writing, *see* correspondence.  
 Lettsom, Dr. John Coakley, 411, 442.  
 Le Vasseur, Thérèse, B. wishes to correspond with, 68, mentioned, 78, 90 *n* 1.  
 Levett, Robert, 272, 281.  
 Leyden, B. visits, 45  
 Leyden University Library, 45 *n* 1  
 liberalism, B's, 72, 80, 81, 155, 238, 281.  
 Lichfield, visited by B and J., 248, visited by B., 291  
 Life Guards, B at the mess of the, 456  
 Lind, Dr. James, 402.  
 Lindsay, Lady Anne, 318  
 Lindsay, Rev. Mr., 506, pastor of the church at Auchinleck, 512.  
 Lisburne, Lord (Wilmot Vaughan, fourth Viscount L.), Temple's patron, 110; B. meets, 221; mentioned, 137, 167, 188, 212, 218, 229, 237, 240, 246, 251, 444.  
 Lisburne, Lady, 222.  
 Literary Club, the, 201, 214, 218, 341, 358, 405, 406, 409, 410, 414, 418, 421, 425, 462.

- Liverpool, B. visits, 295.  
 Lloyd, Robert, 73 n 8; death of, 73-4.  
 London, B.'s delight in, 8, 19, 20, 21, 88, 215, 219, 304, 307, 359, 362, 449, 462; 'a heaven upon earth', 389; houses in, 353.  
*London Chronicle*, 275.  
*London Magazine*, B. a 'proprietor' of, 217; B.'s contributions to, 183, 199 n 3, *see also* Boswell, Publications, *Hypochondriack*.  
 London Tavern, 405, 427.  
 Longinus, 300.  
 Lonsdale, Lord (James Lowther, first Earl of L.), account of, 341 n 2; makes B. Recorder of Carlisle, 341, summons B. to him, 370; B.'s letter to, 372-3; B.'s quarrel with, 396-8, 400; mentioned, 355, 357, 361, 366, 384, 390.  
 Lottery, English State, 421, 428.  
 Loudoun, Lord (John Campbell, fourth Earl of L.), 263; letters to, 520 *et seq.*  
 Love (James Dance, *alias* L.), 3 n 1; B.'s 'second best friend', 6; owes B. money, 15, 32.  
 love, B.'s reflections on, 135.  
 Lowth, Rt Rev Dr. Robert, Bishop of London, his Isaiah, 285; character, 286; visited by B., 287.  
 Lowther, Colonel, 366, 370.  
 Lucan, Lord (Charles Bingham, Baron L., afterwards first Earl of L.), 419, 421.  
 Lyons, B. in, 85.  
 Lyttelton, Lord (George Lyttelton, first Baron L.), 148, 156, 279.  
 Lyttelton, Lord (Thomas, second Baron L.), anecdote of his death, 363.  
 M—, Miss, 461.  
 Macartney, Lord (George Macartney, first Baron M.), 421.  
 Macaulay, Catharine, 148, 175.  
 Macbride, Captain (afterwards Admiral) John, 440.  
 McCrone, Robert, the elder, 496.  
 McCrone, Robert, the younger, 90 n 1.  
 Macdonald Clan, 196.  
 Macdonald, Sir Alexander, 104 n 4, 199.  
 Macdonald, Flora, 282.  
 Macdonald, Ranauld, collector of Gaelic poems, 211.  
 Macklin, Charles, 431; attacked by Malone, 412 n 3, 413, 425.  
 MacLaurin, John (afterwards Lord Dreghorn), 253, 258, 308.  
 Maclean, Alexander, Laird of Col, presented to J. by B., 246.  
 Maclean, Sir Allan, B. speaks in behalf of, 258; his cause, 265.  
 Macleans of Mull, 210.  
 Macleod, Flora, of Rasay, 263.  
 Macpherson, James, his quarrel with J., 209; use of Erse manuscripts, 211; his *History of Great Britain*, 231; its style despised by Hume, 231; *see also* Ossian.  
 Macquarrie (or Macquharrie), of Ulva, sale of his estates, 210, 258, 265, 267.  
 Macqueen, Rev. Donald, 228.  
 magazines, B.'s contributions to, 6, 173 n 5, 183, 199.  
 'mahogany', a liquor, 320.  
 Malone, Catharine, 351.  
 Malone, Edmond, account of, 349 n 3; letters to, 349 *et seq.*; accompanies B. to Oxford, 335; edition of Shakespeare, 341, 354, 379, 381, 406, 409, 412-13, 425; compliment to Burke, 407; quarrel with Steevens, 406, 410, 415; assists B. in the *Life*, 354, 361, 381, 405; 'Johnsonianissimus', 381; wine, purchase of, 414; takes chances in the State Lottery, 421, 423, 428; editor of Reynolds's *Works*, 455; mentioned, 332, 340, 345, 360, 369, 386, 399, 401.  
 Mannheim, B. visits, 57.  
 Mansfield, Lord (William Murray, first Earl of M.), 199, 333; praises B.'s verses, 199.  
 Mansion House, B. at the, 226.  
 Mantua, B. at, 84.  
 Manucci, Count, 254.  
 Mar, Lord (John Erskine, second, or seventh, Earl of M.), an ancestor of B.'s, 88 n 1.  
 Marischal, Lord, (George Keith, tenth Earl M.), account of, 51 n 1; B. proposes to write a 'portrait' of, 63; B. proposes to name a son for, 135.  
 Markham, Most Rev. William, Archbishop of York, B. dines with, 350, 354-5.

- Marley, Rt Rev Dr. Richard, 421.  
 marriage, B's views on, 82, 99, 125,  
   173, requirements in a wife, 3-4,  
   54, 206, effect of, on B, 236.  
 Martial, quoted, 191, 461  
 Mary, Queen of Scots, inscription for  
   her picture, 197, 204, 520  
 Mason, John Monck, 410, 415  
 Mason, Rev. William, poems, 42,  
   *Elfrida*, 2, 217; *Memoirs of Gray*,  
   217, 222, 344, *Memoirs of White-*  
   *head*, 344, B writes to, 230, re-  
   ceives a sour letter from, 234  
 'Matty', a maid at Grantham, 215,  
   224  
 Mauchline, 350  
 Maxwell, Jane, Duchess of Gordon,  
   138-9  
 Meadows, Capt, 160  
 melancholy, B's, 12, 15, 41, 56, 76,  
   80, 100, 180, 193, 221, 228, 236,  
   253-4, 295, 309, 358-9, 376 *et seq*,  
   397, 415, 419, 423, 429, 431, 432,  
   440  
 Melancthon, B writes a letter at his  
   tomb, 58, 263  
 Melville, Lord, *see* Dundas, Henry  
 Memms, Dr, 207-8, 257  
 men of genius, B's passion for know-  
   ing, 8, 57, 62, 66, 86, 114, 160.  
 Metcalfe, Philip, 358, 386, 399, 418.  
 metempsychosis, 288.  
 Michael Angelo, 179  
 Mickle, William Julius, his *Siege of*  
   *Marseilles*, 184, 188; his *Lusiad*,  
   190, 239, referred to, 335 *n* 1.  
 Middlesex Election, 318  
 midshipmen, 439.  
 midwifery, 239  
 military life, B's love of, 8, 12 *n* 1,  
   15, 299  
 Millar, Andrew, publisher, 104.  
 Milles, Miss, B pays court to, 439  
 Mitchell, Andrew, British Envoy at  
   Berlin, 55 *et seq*  
 Mitre tavern, 17, 24, 207.  
 'Moffat woman', *see* D—, Mrs.  
 Molesworth, Lord (Robert, first Vis-  
   count M), author of an *Account of*  
   *Denmark*, 154  
 monarchical spirit, B's, 68, 75, 81,  
   213, 273, 317, 319, 320.  
 monasticism, 95  
 Monbodo, Lord (James Burnet),  
   B's letter and visit to, 194, his  
   *Origin and Progress of Language*,  
   199; sups with B, 228, Johnson  
   presents his *Journey* to, 258, his  
   *Antient Metaphysics*, 287-8, 301;  
   'trimmed', 297; mentioned, 265.  
 Monro, Dr, 320  
 Montesquieu, *Lettres Persanes*, 207.  
 Montgomerie, Col., 375, 472  
 Montgomerie, Margaret, *see* Boswell,  
   Mrs James  
 Montgomery, Mary Ann, 'la belle  
   Irlandoise', 162, 164 *et seq*, 171.  
 Montrose, James, fourth Marquess  
   and first Duke of, 92  
 More, Sir Thomas, 66 *n* 3  
 Morgan, J Pierpont, 1 *n* 1, 78 *n* 3.  
 Morrell, Dr Thomas, translator of  
   Aeschylus, 201  
 Morton, James, B's letter to, 506  
*Mother's Catechism* in Erse, 204  
 Mount Edgcumbe, 243, 246.  
 Mount Stuart, Lord (John, Viscount  
   M S, afterwards fourth Earl of  
   Bute), account of, 80 *n* 3, B's  
   intimacy with, 81, 83, 218, 252,  
   253, character, 248-9, ambassa-  
   dor to Turin, 291, hunts on B's  
   estates, 495, referred to, 229, 245,  
   255.  
 Muratori, 223-4  
 Murdoch, Patrick, *Life of Thomson*,  
   262.  
 Murdock, Harold, 203 *n* 3, 248 *n* 1.  
 Murphy, Arthur, his *Essay on John-*  
   *son*, 427  
 Murray, Sir Alexander, 412  
 Murray, William, *see* Mansfield, Lord.  
 Musset-Pathay, V D, quoted, 85 *n* 3.  
 'Nabob', the, *see* Fullarton.  
 Nairne, William (afterwards Lord  
   Dunsinan), 265  
 Napier, Robina, 10 *n* 1.  
 Naples, B. arrives at, 70; B. leaves,  
   71, B passes three weeks at, 79.  
 'narrowness', B's, 25.  
 Nassau, Count, 32. . .  
 Nassau, Countess of, 43.  
 natural scenery, B's attitude to, 87,  
   116 *n* 1, 195, 238, 243, 276; *see*  
   also Arthur's Seat and Giant's  
   Causeway.  
 Navy, B visits the Grand Fleet, 439,  
   440  
 Needham, Rev. John Turberville,  
   74, 'Honest Tub', 238.  
 negro cause, a, 253, 257, 258.

- Nepean, Evan, B's letter to, 456  
 Neuchâtel Public Library, 45 n 2, 58 n 2.  
 Newgate prisoners, B's activity for, 456  
 Newton, A Edward, 101 n 4, 118 n 5, 330 n 2, 459 n 1, 463 n 2.  
 Nichols, John, 346, 427  
 Nichols, Rev Norton, account and character of, 35, 308, quoted, 129 n 1, referred to, 125, 214, 365.  
*North Briton*, no xlv., 31, no. li, 31; 73-4  
 Northern Circuit of England, B on the, 349-50, 375 *et seq.*, social life on the, 355, 356, 376-7  
 Northern Circuit of Scotland, B accompanies his father on, 4, 6  
 Northumberland, Elizabeth, Duchess of, 65, 417 n 2  
 Norton, Fletcher, 115  
 notoriety, B's, 171.  
 Odell, Rev Jonathan, of Burlington, N J, 454  
 Ogilvie, John, 17, 20, 28.  
 Oglethorpe, General James, 154; dines with B, 160  
*One Pennyworth of Truth*, a pamphlet on the French Revolution, 494.  
*Oracle, The*, a London newspaper, 426.  
 Orkney, Mary, Countess of, B's letter to, 463.  
 Osborn, Sir George, 329  
 Ossian, poems of, 209 *et seq.*  
 Ossory, Lord (John Fitzpatrick, second Earl of Upper Ossory), 406, 410, 415, 421.  
 Outerhouse (Court of Session), 101.  
 Ovid quoted, 333, 380.  
 Oxford University, B visits in company with J, 248, B visits, 334-5; J's diploma from, 345 n 3  
 Paderni, Camillo, 78.  
 Paley, Rev. William, his *Reasons for Contentment*, 446  
 Palmer, Rev Dr., of Grantham, 212-13, 226.  
 Palmer, Mary 'Palmeria' (afterwards Lady Inchiquin and later Marchioness of Thomond), niece of Sir Joshua Reynolds, 319, 342, 345, 354, 418, 463 n 2, opinion of B, 418 n 5, angry with B, 434, devotion to Sir Joshua, 441  
 Palmer, Theophila (Mrs Richard Lovell Gwatkin), 'Offy', niece of Sir Joshua Reynolds, 343.  
 Palmerston, Lord (Henry Temple, second Viscount P.), 406, 407, 454.  
 Paoli, General Pasquale, B. intimate with, 86; Pitt's opinion of, 92; Gray's opinion of, 129 n 1, Lord Auchinleck's opinion of, 184 n 2, correspondence with B referred to, 104, 142, 164, 171, leaves Corsica, 172 n 3, arrives in England, 174, received by King George, 174; visits Auchinleck, 184; visits Wilton with B, 220; B stays at his house in London, 230, 252, 322, 327, 335, relations with his brother, 230, receives B's vow of sobriety, 251, dines with S. J, 291; returns to Corsica, 460 n 2, *Address to the Corsicans*, 463, referred to, 225, 243, 277-8, 330, 355, 362-3, 461, 463  
 Paris, B arrives in, 86, leaves, 90 n 1  
 Parliament, B. ambitious of entering, 21, 184, 307, 366, B. a candidate for, 355, 367, 370-1, B. writes a poem on, 72, 519, rights of, 273-4.  
 Parliament of Ireland, 299.  
 Parnell, Rev. Dr. Thomas, his *Contentment*, 221; a disputed passage in his *Hermut*, 273.  
 Parr, Rev. Dr. Samuel, B's letter to, 411; controversy with Hurd, 345 n 1, 357, 411; epitaph for S. J, 465.  
 Paul, Saint, quoted, 201.  
 Pauw, Cornelius de, *Mœurs des Grecs*, 359  
 Pearce, Rt Rev. Zachary, Bishop of Rochester, his relations with Churchill, 16, his *Sermons*, 287.  
 pecuniary affairs of B, 15, 33, 101, 169, 239, 301, 304, 307, 327, 329, 331-2, 342-4, 352, 380, 384-6, 413-14, 415, 421, 435, 461-2.  
 Pembroke, Lord (Henry Herbert, tenth Earl of P.), B's relations with, 160, 215  
 Penn, Governor Richard, 366, 370, 386, 393.  
 Pennant, Thomas, 277-8.  
 Percy, Lord (Hugh, first Duke of Northumberland, third creation), 182 n 3, 277, 278.

- Percy, Very Rev Dr. Thomas, Dean of Carlisle, later Bishop of Dromore, his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, 65 n 1, 191, 417 n 2; P. asks aid of B., 191, his *Northumberland Household Book*, sent to B., 192, B's letters to, 182, 191, 193, 248, 278, 281, 321, 324, 325, 335, 340, 391, 393, at Alnwick, 182, 336, invited to Goldsmith's chambers, 193, quarrel with S. J., 277; popular in Carlisle, 295; B. visits in Carlisle, 321, 324; death of his son, 321-2, Bishop of Dromore, 322, presents Selden's *Table-Talk* to B., 322, 326, B. regrets P's absence from London, 336, 341, his edition of Goldsmith, 392, 394, accepts a dedication from S. J., 417 n 2, B's assistance from in writing the *Life*, 326, 335, 336, 340, 391, 394, 417, fears B's use of information given him, 394, mentioned, 272 n 2, 425, 429.
- perseverance, B's, 181.
- Philips, C. C., 195
- Piccinini, Niccola, 151
- Pinkerton, John, B's letter to, 327.
- Piozzi, Mrs, see Thrale, Hester.
- pique, B's, 438
- Pitt, William, the elder, later first Earl of Chatham, B's correspondence with, 87, 104, 110, B calls on, 88 n 1; B asks him to correspond, 111, referred to, 232.
- Pitt, William, the younger, B's letter to, 320, neglects B., 356, 366-7, 371, 525, apostrophized in B's *No Abolition of Slavery*, 434 n
- Plautus, 94, 446
- Pliny, 78.
- Plutarch, 86, 92.
- poetry, B's verses, 6, 28, 48, 73, 75, 76, 83, 85, 145, 199 n 3; specimen of a long poem, 72, 519, B's knowledge of old Scots popular verse, 191-2, 330
- Pope, Alexander, quoted, 48, 129, 205, 220, 306, 337, 349, 464; his Note about S. J., 326.
- Porter, Lucy, 293, 296.
- Porteus, Rt Rev Beilby, Bishop of Chester, B. visits, 293 *et seq.*; character, 300
- Portland, Lord (William Henry Cavendish Bentinck, third Duke of P.), 357.
- Pott, Ven Archdeacon, 392.
- Powlett, Rev. Charles, 401 n 3, 420, 430, 439, 441, 442
- Praises of Dr Samuel Johnson*, 322.
- Preston, Sir Charles, Bart., 325.
- Preston, Robert, 462.
- Prestonfield (Priestfield Parks), 79, 96.
- pride, B's family, 109, 227, 242, 301.
- Pringle, Sir John, 104, 160, 218, 232, 256, 288, favours B's marriage with Zehde, 147
- Prior, Matthew, quoted, 265.
- pronunciation, B. gets rid of his Scots, 32 n 2
- Pulteney, William, 318.
- Quin, James, quoted, 251; generosity, 262.
- Railton, —, 343.
- Rampagers*, 279
- Ramsay, Allan, 283.
- Ramsay, André Michel de, 359.
- Rapun, Paul de, 2
- Raynal, Abbé, 214, 232.
- Reade, A. Lyell, 341 n 1.
- reading, B's views on, 22-4, 224, 226, 239, 301, 304, 305, 307.
- Reed, Isaac, B's letters to, 395, 396; 'Steady', 429.
- Regency proposed, 355-6.
- Reid, John, a client of B's, 96.
- religion, B's views on, 49, 54, 58, 98, 160, 256, 306, 337; convinced of the truth of Christianity, 30, 98; doubts, 206, 239, 284, Calvinism, B's dislike of, 54; Anglican Church, B's love of the, 220, 267, 282, 295, 297; Roman Church, B's interest in the, 104 n 5, 381; natural, 66.
- retirement, disadvantages of, 102, 235; B. lives in a country house, 261
- Revolution of 1688, 284, 299.
- Reynolds, Sir Joshua, 319, 345, 360, 369, 386, 391, 399, 406, 410, 415, 416, 417, 421, 423, 436, 465, 524; agrees to paint B's portrait, 327-8; S. J.'s executor, 338; dinners at his house, 337, 358, 407, 418, gifts from Catherine II of Russia, 394-5; accepts of a dedication

- from S. J., 417, his failing eyesight, 379, 441, last illness, 442, his *Discourses on Art*, 395, 429, 455; his *Tour to the Netherlands*, 455.
- Reynolds, Frances, 521.
- Ritson, Joseph, 410, 415
- Rivarola, Count, 96.
- Robertson, Dr William, 156, 229, 233, 250, 521; his *Charles V*, 17, 103, 161, 239; B disappointed in, 245.
- Rogers, Professor Robert, 395 n 2
- Rolt, Richard, 424
- 'romantic' plans, 78, 116
- Rome, B eager to see, 56; visits, 72-80
- Ross, David, account of, 199 n 3; death, 401.
- Roths, Lady, 200.
- Round Robin, 408
- Rous, George, reply to Burke, 408
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, a sophist, 27, 29; B eager to meet, 57, 59, B's letters to, 58, 62, 65, 76, 85; R's opinion of B., 59 n 1; B. flatters, 60, 66, B sends his papers to, 63, B. praises R in verse, 77, goes to England, 85 n 3, 86; B. wishes to introduce R. to S. J., 87; quarrels with B. and his English friends, 103; caricatured as the 'Savage Man', 103; quoted, 248; mentioned, 98, 117 n, 288; *Héloïse*, 68, *Lettres de la Montagne*, 66.
- Royal Infirmary (Aberdeen), B counsellor for the, 207-8.
- Royal Society, 335.
- Rudd, Margaret Caroline, B's relations with, 251-2
- Ruddiman, Thomas, 282.
- Russia, B. desirous of visiting, 268 n 1; threatened war with, 433.
- Ruston, Mr., 339.
- Saint George's Church, Hanover Sq., 399.
- Saint Paul's Cathedral, 220, 225; S. J. compared to, 195.
- Sastres, Francesco, 323.
- 'Savage Man', the, B's caricature of Rousseau, 103.
- Saville, Sir George, 298
- schoolmaster, case of a, 186, 270.
- Scotland and the Scots, popular dislike of, 17 n 3, 31 n 2, Union with England, B questions the value of the, 298; lawyers, J.'s opinion of, 208, physicians, J.'s opinion of, 320.
- Scott, George Lewis, 262.
- Scott, Sir Walter, quoted, 184 n 2.
- Scott, Dr, later Sir, William, (afterwards Lord Stowell), 338, 386, 407, 426, 432; B's letter to, 437.
- Scottish Regulations, 335.
- second sight, 212.
- Selden, John, his *Table Talk*, 322, 326.
- Selge, —, 406.
- Septchènes, M. de, 232, 233.
- sermons, 234.
- Settle, Elkanah, 23.
- Seward, Anna, 292, 346, 347; B's letter to, 348; poems, 349.
- Seward, Rev. Thomas, of Lichfield, 292.
- Seward, William, 265, 414, 418
- Shakespeare, William, a new edition of, 185 n 1, *Hamlet* quoted, 159; *Macbeth* quoted, 194, 195, 409, 433; *Othello*, B. sees a performance of, 139
- Shakespeare Jubilee, 173, 183
- shall and will, B's use of, 269 n 1, 270 n 1.
- Sharp, Richard, 429.
- Shaw, Rev. William, *Erse Grammar*, 260.
- Sherbrooke, Sir John Coape (afterwards Viscount S.), 360, 363.
- Sheridan, Richard Brinsley, summary of the case against Hastings, 350
- Sheridan, Thomas, lends money to B., 161.
- Siege of Belgrade*, an opera, 431.
- Siena, B's 'Signora' of, 112, 114, 120.
- signatures to letters, 84, 90.
- Silverton, Miss, 226.
- Simpson, P. B., 228 n 5.
- Sinclair, Robert, 104 n 3.
- Sky, 195
- slavery, 257, 433, 435.
- Smart, Christopher, 39.
- Smith, Adam, quoted by B., 46; his *Wealth of Nations*, 103, 118, 250; elected to the Literary Club, 250; an infidel, 264.
- Smith, D. Nichol, 339 n 2.

- Smith, Very Rev William, 300  
 social genius of B., 213, 285, 293, 366, 385  
 Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge in Scotland, 204  
 Soho Academy, 356, 385  
 Spain, 24  
*Spectator, The*, 336.  
 Spence, Joseph, 91, 152, 157, death, 165  
 Spottiswoode, John, 333  
 Staffa, 265  
 stage-coach a *duhjaunce*, 249  
 Stanhope, Lord (Charles, third Earl S), reply to Burke, 391  
 Stanyan, Temple, his *Account of Switzerland*, 154  
 Star and Garter Tavern, 150.  
 Steevens, George, B's letter to, 402; quarrel with Malone, 406, 410, 413, 414, 415; discourages B., 416  
 Steuart, Sir James, his attack on the Corsicans, 128, 130.  
 Stevenson, John, one of B's teachers, 300.  
 Stevenson, Mrs., a schoolmistress, 364  
 Stobie, John, 170.  
 Stockdale, John, 393  
 Stormont, Lord (David Murray, Viscount S., afterwards second Earl of Mansfield), 220.  
 Stothart, Thomas, 411, 474, 488  
 Stow, Ann, 'Celia' (later Mrs. William Temple, *q v*), 112.  
 Stow, Fenwick, 162  
 Strabo, 300.  
 Strahan, B.'s letter to, 256; 'an obtuse man', 286, mentioned, 275.  
 Strange, Mrs Robert, 89, 152, 276.  
 Stuart, Professor George, 5 n 4.  
 Stuart, Hon Col James Archibald, accompanies B to Lichfield, 291, to Chester and Liverpool, 293, 295, 299.  
 Stuart, Margaret Conyngham (Hon. Mrs. James S), B.'s relations with, 219, 224, 252; B. dines *tête-à-tête* with, 225, Mrs. B's friend, 226.  
 Stuart, Hon. and Rev. William (afterwards Archbishop of Armagh), 357.  
 Sully, preface to, wrongly attributed to S J., 281.  
 Sunderlin, Lord (Richard Malone, Baron S), 354, 411, 429.  
 superstition, B.'s, 212, 360, 363-4.  
 Swift, Jonathan, 75  
 Swinton, John (afterwards Lord S), 235  
 Switzerland, B. proposes a tour to, 205  
 Symons, Sir Richard, 436  
 tacksmen, 212  
*Tailor, The*, 336  
 taxation, 232, 233, 239  
 Taylor, Rev Dr. John, summons J to London, 252; mentioned, 260  
 Taylor, Michael Angelo, B dines with, 423  
 Temple, Ann Stow (Mrs William T), 112, 119, 135, 206, 439, B's letter to, 206, opinion of B., 223, 226  
 Temple, Anne, eldest daughter of the above and the Rev William T., (Mrs Charles Powlett), 400; engagement and marriage, 401, 405, 420, 430-1; an unpopular visitor, 457-8.  
 Temple, Midshipman (afterwards Rear-Admiral), Francis, 'Frank', second son of the Rev. William T., birth, 206, naval fortunes of, 386, 419-20, 457  
 Temple, John James, son of the Rev William T., 447, 458.  
 Temple, Octavius, son of the Rev. William T., 447, 458.  
 Temple, Lt. Robert, brother of the Rev. William T., 19, 22, 26, 28, 32, 35, 36-7, 65, 176.  
 Temple, William, father of the Rev. William T., 25 n 1, 34, 64-5.  
 Temple, William Johnson, the younger, eldest son of the Rev William T., birth of, 167, B's godson, 167, 178, death of, 337.  
 TEMPLE, the REVEREND WILLIAM JOHNSON, characterized, 1 n 1, 10, 400, pensioner at Cambridge, 5 n 6, 7 n 1, 10 n 2, 19, 217, residence in London, 10, family misfortunes, 25, 34, 64; acquaintance with Gray the poet, 20, 28, 183, ordained priest, 97; Vicar of Mamhead, 98, 129, 166, 221; dissatisfaction with his post, 176, 180, 214, 222, 244, 245; marriage, 119, Vicar of St. Gluvias, Cornwall, 284; B visits, 221, 444; visitor in London, 397-8, 400;

